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dramatic lyric – the emotion
n that of some one else.

lyric – a short [illegible]
poem expressing the single
thought of the [illegible]

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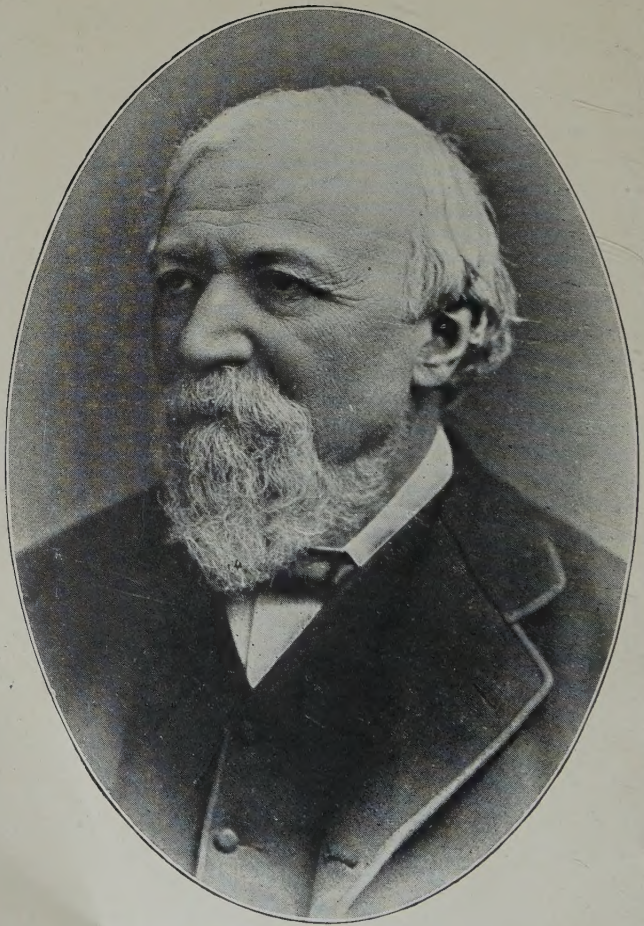
nonologue – series of remarks
rally or in letter form to a
person or group.

amatic monologue –

em of paradox – a poem which
eems absurd but in which there
a profound truth.



ROBERT BROWNING

The Lake Library Edition

SELECTIONS
FROM
THE POEMS AND PLAYS
OF
Robert Browning

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
MYRA REYNOLDS
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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INTRODUCTION

THE LIFE OF BROWNING

Robert Browning, the poet, was the third of that name. The first Robert Browning, a man of energy and ability, held an important post in the Bank of England. His wife, Margaret Tittle, was a Creole from the West Indies, and at the time of her marriage her property was still in the estates owned by her father near St. Kitts. When their son, the second Robert, was seven years of age, his mother died, and his father afterwards married again. The second wife's ascendency over her husband was unfortunately exerted against the best interests of the son. His desire to become an artist, his wish for a university training, were disregarded, and he was sent instead to St. Kitts, where he was given employment on his mother's sugar plantations. The breach between Robert and his father became absolute when the boy defied local prejudice by teaching a negro to read, and when, because of what his father considered a sentimental objection to slavery, he finally refused to remain in the West Indies. The young man returned to England and at twenty-two started on an independent career as a clerk in the Bank of England. In 1811 he married Sarah Anne Wiedemann. They settled in Camberwell, London, where Robert, the poet, was born, May 7, 1812, and his sister Sarianna in 1814.

Browning's father was a competent official in the Bank and a successful business man, but his tastes were æsthetic

and literary, and his leisure time was accordingly devoted to such pursuits as the collection of old books and manuscripts. He also read widely in both classic and modern literatures. The first book of the *Iliad* he knew by heart, and all the *Odes* of Horace, and he was accustomed to soothe his child to sleep by humming to him snatches of Anacreon to the tune of "A Cottage in the Wood." Mr. Browning had also considerable skill in two realms of art, for he drew vigorous portraits and caricatures, and he had, even according to his son's mature judgment, extraordinary force and facility in verse-making. In character he was serene, lovable, gentle, "tenderhearted to a fault." So instinctively chivalrous was he that there was "no service which the ugliest, oldest, crossest woman in the world might not have exacted of him." He was a man of great physical vigor, dying at the age of eighty-four without ever having been ill.

Browning's mother was the daughter of William Wiedemann, a German who had settled in Dundee and married a Scotch wife. Mrs. Browning impressed all who knew her by her sweetness and goodness. Carlyle spoke of her as "the true type of a Scottish gentlewoman"; her son's friend, Mr. Kenyon, said that such as she had no need to go to heaven, because they made it wherever they were; and her son called her "a divine woman." She had deep religious instincts and concerned herself particularly with her son's moral and spiritual development. The bond between them was always very strong, and when she died in 1849 his wife wrote, "He has loved his mother as such passionate natures can love, and I never saw a man so bowed down in an extremity of sorrow—never."

Robert Browning's childhood was passed in an unusually serene and happy home. In *Development* he tells how, at five years of age, he was made to understand the main

facts of the Trojan War by his father's clever use of the cat, the dogs, the pony in the stable, and the page-boy, to impersonate the heroes of that ancient conflict. Latin declensions were taught the child by rhymes concocted by his father as memory-easing devices. Stories and even lessons were made intelligible and vivid by colored maps and comic drawings. Until the boy was fourteen, his schooling was of the most casual sort, his only formal training being such as he received in the comparatively unimportant three or four years he spent, after he was ten, at Mr. Ready's private school. His real education came, through all his early life, from his home. What would now be called nature-study he pursued ardently and on his own initiative in the home garden and neighboring fields. His love for animals was inherited from his mother and fostered by her. He used to keep, says Mrs. Orr in her account of his life, "owls and monkeys, magpies and hedge-hogs, an eagle, and even a couple of large snakes, constantly bringing home the more portable animals in his pockets and transferring them to his mother for immediate care." Browning says that his faculty of observation at this time would not have disgraced a Seminole Indian. In the matter of reading he was not entirely without advice and guidance, but was, on the whole, allowed unusual freedom of choice. He afterwards told Mrs. Orr that Milton, Quarles, Voltaire, Mandeville, and Horace Walpole were the authors in whom, as a boy, he particularly delighted. His love for art was established and developed by visits to the Dulwich picture gallery, of which he afterwards wrote to Miss Barrett with "love and gratitude" because he had been allowed to go there before the age prescribed by the rules, and had thus learned to know "a wonderful Rembrandt," a Watteau, "three triumphant Murillos," a Giorgione Music Lesson, and various Poussins. His

marked early susceptibility to music is evidenced by an incident narrated by Mr. Sharp: "One afternoon his mother was playing in the twilight to herself. She was startled to hear a sound behind her. Glancing round she beheld a little white figure distinct against an oak bookcase, and could just discern two large wistful eyes looking earnestly at her. The next moment the child had sprung into her arms, sobbing passionately at he knew not what, but, as his paroxysm subsided, whispering with shy urgency: 'Play! Play!'"

In various ways the boy Robert was noticeably precocious. He could not remember a time, he said, when he did not rhyme, and his sister records that as a very little boy he used to walk around the table "spanning out on the smooth mahogany the scansion of verses he had composed." Some of these early lines he could recall and he could recall, too, the prodigious satisfaction with which he uttered them, especially the sentence he put into the mouth of a man who had just committed murder—"Now my soul is satisfied." At twelve he had a volume named *Incondita* ready for publication. To discerning eyes the little volume was a production of great promise, dominated though it was by the influence of his father's idol, Pope, and of his own temporary ruling deity, Byron. But a publisher was not found, and in later years, at Browning's request, the two extant manuscript copies of *Incondita* were destroyed, along with many others of his youthful poems that had been preserved by his father.

Browning's early tastes in the realm of poetry were, on the whole, romantic. "Now here is the truth," he wrote to Miss Barrett, "the first book I ever bought in my life was Ossian—and years before that the first *composition* I ever was guilty of was something in *imitation* of Ossian whom I had not read, but *conceived*, through two or three

scraps in other books." But the decisive literary influence was yet to come. When he was fourteen he happened to see on a bookstall a volume marked, "Mr. Shelley's Atheistical Poem. Very Scarce"; and he at once wished to know more of this Mr. Shelley. After a perplexing search his mother found the desired poems, most of them in first editions, at the Olliers, Vere Street, London. She took home also three volumes by another poet, John Keats, who, she was told, was the subject of an elegy by Shelley. Browning never forgot the May evening when he first read these new books, to the accompaniment, he said, of two nightingales, one in a copper-beech, one in a laburnum, each striving to outdo the other in melody. A new imaginative world was opened to the boy. In *Memorabilia* he afterwards recorded the strong intellectual and emotional excitement, the thrill and ecstasy of this poetical experience. To Shelley especially did he give immediate and fervid personal loyalty, even to the extent of endeavoring to follow him in "atheism" and vegetarianism.

When at fourteen the boy left Mr. Ready's school it was decided that his further education should be carried on at home under private tutors. He studied music under able masters, one in thorough-bass, and one in execution. He played and sang, and he composed spirited settings for songs. He read voraciously. He took lessons in dancing, riding, boxing, and fencing, and is said to have shown himself exceptionally active and vigorous. He kept up his interest in art, and he practiced drawing from casts. He found time also for various friendships. For Miss Eliza and Miss Sarah Flower, two sisters, nine and seven years his senior, he had a deep affection. Both young ladies were gifted in music, and this was one source of their attractions for the music-loving boy. Miss Sarah Flower wrote sacred hymns, the best known of which is "Nearer

my God to Thee," and her sister composed music which Browning, even in his mature years, ranked as of especial significance. Other friends of this period were Joseph Arnold, afterwards Chief Justice of Bombay, and a man of great ability; Alfred Domett, a striking and interesting personality described by Browning in a poem beginning "What's Become of Waring," and referred to in "The Guardian Angel"; and the three Silverthorne boys, his cousins, the death of one of whom was the occasion of the poem "May and Death."

In spite of friends, a beautiful home, and congenial work, this period of home tutelage does not seem to have been altogether happy. His sister in commenting on this period said, "The fact was, poor boy, he had outgrown his social surroundings. They were absolutely good, but they were narrow; it could not be otherwise; he chafed under them." Furthermore, the youth, before he had found his real work as a poet, was restless, irritable, and opinionated; and an ever-present cause of friction was the fact that there were few subjects of taste on which he and his father did not disagree. Their poetic tastes were especially at variance. The father counted Pope supreme in poetry, and it was many years before he could take pleasure in the form in which his son's genius expressed itself. All the more noteworthy, then, is the generosity with which Mr. Browning looked after his son's interests through the unprofitable early years of his poetic career, a generosity never lost sight of by the son. Mr. Sharp in his *Life of Browning* records some words uttered by Mr. Browning a week or two before his death, which show how permanent was his sense of indebtedness to his father. "It would have been quite unpardonable in my case," he said, "not to have done my best. My dear father put me in a condition most favorable for the best

work I was capable of. When I think of the many authors who have had to fight their way through all sorts of difficulties, I have no reason to be proud of my achievements. . . . He secured for me all the care and comfort that a literary man needs to do good work. It would have been shameful if I had not done my best to realize his expectations of me."

After it was determined that Robert should "commence poet," he and his father came to the conclusion that a university training had many elements foreign to the aim the youth had set before him, and that a richer and more directly available preparation could be gained from "sedulous cultivation of the powers of his mind" at home, and from "seeing life in the best sense" at home and abroad. Mrs. Orr tells us that the first qualifying step of the zealous young poet was to read and digest the whole of Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary.*

Browning's first published poem, *Pauline,* appeared anonymously in January, 1833, when he was twenty years old. This poem is of especial autobiographical interest. Its enthusiastic praise of Shelley recalls his early devotion to that poet, and in many scattered passages we find references to his own personality or experiences. The following lines show with what intensity he recreated the lives and scenes in the books he read:

> And I myself went with the tale—a god
> Wandering after beauty, or a giant
> Standing vast in the sunset—an old hunter
> Talking with gods, or a high-crested chief
> Sailing with troops of friends to Tenedos.
> I tell you, naught has ever been so clear
> As the place, the time, the fashion of those lives:
> I had not seen a work of lofty art,
> Nor woman's beauty, nor sweet nature's face,

> Yet, I say, never morn broke clear as those
> On the dim clustered isles in the blue sea,
> The deep groves and white temples and wet caves;
> And nothing ever will surprise me now—
> Who stood beside the naked Swift-footed,
> Who bound my forehead with Proserpine's hair.

There is true and powerful self-analysis in the lines beginning:

> I am made up of an intensest life;

and the invocation in lines 811-854 reveals the passionately religious nature of the young poet. In *The Early Writings of Robert Browning*[1] Mr. Gosse gives an account of the impression made by this poem upon men so diverse as the Rev. William Johnson Fox, John Stuart Mill, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, to all of whom, in spite of its crudities and very evident immaturity, it seemed a production of exceptional promise.

After an interval of two years Browning published, this time under his own name, a second long poem. The subject, Paracelsus, had been suggested by the friend, Amédeé de Ripert-Monclar, to whom the poem is dedicated. In pursuance of his purposed rehabilitation of a vanished age Browning made extensive researches in the British Museum into the history of Paracelsus, the great leader in sixteenth century medical science; but in the poem the facts are subordinated to a minute analysis of the spiritual history of Paracelsus. The poem was too abstruse in subject and style to bring Browning popularity, but his genius was recognized by important critics, and, though he was but twenty-three, he was admitted into the foremost literary circles of London. One of

[1] *The Century*, December, 1881, Vol. XXIII, pp. 189-200.

his most distinguished new friends was Mr. Macready, the great actor. It was at his house that Browning first met Mr. Forster, who had already written favorable critiques of *Paracelsus,* one for *The Examiner* and one for *The New Monthly Magazine.* Other literary associates of this period were Leigh Hunt, Barry Cornwall, Sergeant Talfourd, Dickens, and Walter Savage Landor. There were not infrequent dinners and suppers to which the young poet was welcomed. He is described as being at this period singularly handsome. "He looks and acts," said Mr. Macready, "more like a youthful poet than any man I ever saw." He had sculpturesque masses of dark wavy hair, a skin like delicate ivory, deep-set, expressive eyes, and a sensitive mouth. He was slender, graceful, and most attractive in manner, and he was something of a dandy in his attention to dress. He is said to have made an especially good impression on one occasion when the circumstances must have been as trying as they were exhilarating. In May, 1836, a group of poets had assembled at Mr. Talfourd's to celebrate Macready's successful production of Talfourd's *Ion.* Browning sat opposite Macready, who was between Wordsworth and Landor. When Talfourd proposed a toast, "The Poets of England," he spoke in complimentary terms of Wordsworth and Landor, but called for a response from "the youngest of the Poets of England, the author of *Paracelsus.*" Landor raised his cup to the young man, and Wordsworth shook hands with him across the table, saying, "I am proud to know you, Mr. Browning."

Browning's third literary venture was a tragedy, *Strafford,* dedicated to Macready, at whose request it was written. The drama presents the impeachment, condemnation, and execution of the Earl of Strafford, a statesman who, according to the play, loved the unworthy

King Charles the First and sacrificed everything, even to life itself, in his blind loyalty to a master who treacherously deserted him in the hour of need. It was a topic to which Browning had already given much thought, for he had the preceding year completed, from materials supplied by Mr. John Forster, a *Life of Strafford* begun by Forster for Lardner's *Eminent British Statesmen.*[1] The question of the historic truthfulness of the drama is discussed by the historian Gardiner in the Introduction to Miss Emily H. Hickey's edition of *Strafford.* He shows that the play is in its details and "even in the very roots of the situation" untrue to fact, and yet he maintains that in the chief characters there is essential truth of conception. "Every time that I read the play," says Gardiner, "I feel more certain that Browning has seized the real Strafford . . . Charles, too, with his faults, perhaps exaggerated, is nevertheless the real Charles." The play was produced at Covent Garden Theater in May, 1837, with Macready as Strafford and Miss Helen Faucit as Lady Carlisle, and was successful in spite of poor scenery and costuming and poor acting in some of the parts. But owing to the financial condition of the theater and the consequent withdrawal of one of the important actors after the fifth night, the play had but a brief run. It was presented again in 1886 under the auspices of the Browning Society, and its power as an acting play "surprised and impressed" the audience.

Before the composition of *Strafford* Browning had begun a long poem, *Sordello,* which he completed after his first visit to Italy in 1838, and published in 1840. No one of his poems is more difficult to read, and many are the stories told of the dismay occasioned by its various

[1]See the article by Mr. F. J. Furnivall in the *Pall Mall Gazette* for April, 1890.

perplexities. The effect of this poem on Browning's fame was disastrous. In fact, after *Sordello* there began a period, twenty years long, of almost complete indifference in England to Browning's work. The enthusiasm over the promise of his early poems died quite away. Late in life Mr. Browning commented on this period of his literary career as a time of "prolonged desolateness." Yet the years 1841-1846 are the years in which he attained his poetic maturity, and years in which he did some of his best work. During this period he brought out the series somewhat fancifully called *Bells and Pomegranates.* The phrase itself comes from *Exodus* xxviii, 33, 34. As a title Browning explained it to mean "something like a mixture of music with discoursing, sound with sense, poetry with thought." This cheap serial edition, the separate numbers of which sold at first at sixpence and later at half a crown, included *Pippa Passes, King Victor and King Charles, Dramatic Lyrics, The Return of the Druses, A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, Colombe's Birthday, Dramatic Romances and Lyrics, Luria,* and *A Soul's Tragedy.*

All of Browning's plays except *Strafford* and *In a Balcony* came out of this series. The most beautiful of them all, *Pippa Passes,* appeared in 1841. It is hardly a drama at all in the conventional sense, though it has one scene, that between Ottima and Sebald, of the highest dramatic power; but it has always been a favorite with readers. When it was published Miss Barrett wrote to Mr. Browning that she found it in her heart to covet the authorship of this poem more than any other of his works, and he said in answer that he, too, liked *Pippa* better than anything else he had yet done. Mr. Sharp, while emphasizing the undramatic quality of the play, counts it "the most imperishable because the most nearly immaculate of Browning's dramatic poems." "It seems to me," he adds,

"like all simple and beautiful things, profound enough for the sinking plummet of the most curious explorer of the depths of life. It can be read, re-read, learned by heart, and the more it is known the wider and more alluring are the avenues of imaginative thought which it discloses. It has, more than any other long composition by its author, that quality of symmetry, that *symmetria prisca* recorded of Leonardo da Vinci in the Latin epitaph of Platino Piatto; and, as might be expected, its mental basis, what Rossetti called fundamental brain work, is as luminous, depth within depth, as the morning air . . . Everyone who knows Browning at all knows *Pippa Passes*."

Of the seven dramas published in *Bells and Pomegranates* there is comparatively little stage history to record. In spite of occasional fairly successful productions it must be admitted that Browning's plays have never achieved, probably never will achieve, popularity in the shape of long runs in many cities.[1] They are too subjective, too analytic, too psychological, for quick or easy understanding. But to the reader they offer many

[1]The first production of *Pippa Passes* was given in Copley Hall, Boston, in 1899, with an arrangement in six scenes by Miss Helen A. Clarke. *The Return of the Druses* was arranged and presented by Miss Charlotte Porter in 1902 and was a dramatic success. *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* was brought out by Macready, with Phelps in the chief part and with Miss Helen Faucit as Mildred. It was played to crowded houses and received much applause. It was revived by Phelps at Sadler's Wells in 1848; and by the Browning Society in 1885 at St. George's Hall, London. In the winter of that year the play was given in Washington by Lawrence Barrett. It has also within a few years been admirably presented by Mrs. Lemoyne in New York and elsewhere. *Colombe's Birthday*, which was published in 1844, was not put upon the stage till 1853, when it was performed at the Haymarket Theater in London with Lady Martin (Helen Faucit) as Colombe. It was performed in Boston in 1854 and enthusiastically received. It was revived in 1885 with Miss Alma Murray as Colombe, when it was commented on as being "charming on the boards, clearer, more direct in action, more picturesque, more full of delicate surprises than one imagines it in print." It was also successfully produced at McVicker's Theater, Chicago, in November, 1894, with Miss Marlowe as Colombe.

delights. The stories are clear, coherent, interesting; the characters strongly individualized; the crises of experience stimulating; the interaction of personalities subtly analyzed; the poetry noble and beautiful.

The two non-dramatic numbers of *Bells and Pomegranates* were *Dramatic Lyrics* (No. 3, 1842) and *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* (No. 7, 1845). The first included such poems as "Cavalier Tunes," "In a Gondola," "Porphyria," and "The Pied Piper of Hamelin"; the second included "How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," "The Lost Leader," "The Tomb at St. Praxed's," "The Flight of the Duchess," "The Boy and the Angel," and the first part of "Saul." These poems, together with the dramas, make a remarkably rich body of poetry to be produced in the short space of five years. And the character of the work, its variety and beauty and strength and originality, were such that its meager and grudging acceptance seems now inexplicable.

The most important event in the life of Browning during this period was his acquaintance with Miss Elizabeth Barrett. In 1844 she brought out a new volume of poems which he saw and greatly admired. He wrote to her expressing delight in her work and asking permission to call; but Miss Barrett, owing to long-continued invalidism, had lived in almost entire seclusion, and she was not at first willing to receive Mr. Browning. This was in January, 1845, and many letters passed between them before the first interview in the following May. Mr. Browning's love for Miss Barrett found almost immediate expression and she was soon conscious of an equally strong love for him, but for a considerable time she persistently refused to marry him. To her mind the obstacles were almost insurmountable. Of these her

ill-health was chief. She could not consent, she said, to dim the prosperities of his career by a union with her future, which she characterized as a precarious thing, a thing for making burdens out of—but not for his carrying. In exchange for the "noble extravagancies" of his love she could bring him only "anxiety and more sadness than he was born to." This obstacle of ill-health was unexpectedly modified by a very mild winter and by the new physical vigor brought in the train of new happiness. From this point of view the marriage, though hazardous, was practicable by the end of the summer of 1846. A second obstacle lay in the nature and opinions of Miss Barrett's father, who governed even his grown-up children by "an incredible system of patriarchal absolutism." By what was variously termed an obliquity of the will, an eccentricity, a monomania, he had decided that none of his children should marry, and on this point he demanded "passive obedience." It was perfectly clear that Miss Barrett could not gain his consent to her marriage, and so, after long hesitation and much unhappiness, she decided to marry Mr. Browning without that consent. In order to save her family and close friends from the blame sure to fall upon them for the remotest sanction of her marriage, her plans were kept an absolute secret. She met Mr. Browning at Marylebone Church on September 12, 1846, and they were married there, Mrs. Browning returning at once to her own home, where she remained till a week later, when she started for Italy with her husband. The wedding was then announced. Throughout her father's life Mrs. Browning endeavored to placate him, for she devotedly loved him and she had been his favorite child, but in vain. He would never see her again, he returned her letters unopened, and he would not allow her to be spoken of in his presence.

After resting a week in Paris Mr. and Mrs. Browning went on to Pisa, where they remained nearly seven months. The "miracle" of the Pisa life was Mrs. Browning's gain in health. "You are not *improved,* you are *transformed,*" was Mrs. Jameson's exclamation. It was at Pisa that Mr. Browning came to know of the sonnets his wife had written during the progress of their courtship and engagement. In *Critical Kit-Kats* (1896) Mr. Gosse tells the story as Mr. Browning gave it to him: "One day, early in 1847, their breakfast being over, Mrs. Browning went upstairs, while her husband stood at the window watching the street till the table could be cleared. He was presently aware of someone behind him, although the servant had gone. It was Mrs. Browning who held him by the shoulder to prevent his turning to look at her, and at the same time pushed a packet of papers into the pocket of his coat. She told him to read that and to tear it up if he did not like it; and then she fled again to her room." Mr. Browning felt at once that he had no right to keep such poetry as a private possession. "I dared not," he said, "reserve to myself the finest sonnets written in any language since Shakespeare's." They were accordingly published in 1850, under the intentionally mystifying title, *Sonnets from the Portuguese.*

The Brownings reached Florence April 20, 1847. After several changes they were, in May, 1848, established in the home in which they remained during Mrs. Browning's life. It was a suite of rooms on the second floor of the Palazzo Guidi. Of the practical side of this early Florentine life, Mrs. Browning wrote, "My dear brothers have the illusion that nobody should marry on less than two thousand a year. Good heavens! how preposterous it does seem to me! We scarcely spend three hundred, and I have every luxury I ever had, and which it would be

so easy to give up, at need; and Robert wouldn't sleep, I think, if an unpaid bill dragged itself by any chance into another week. He says that when people get into pecuniary difficulties his sympathies always go with the butchers and the bakers." In accordance with this horror of owing five shillings five days, the furnishings of the new home, "the rococo chairs, spring sofas, carved bookcases, satin from cardinals' beds, and the rest," were accumulated at a pace dictated by the bank account, but for all that it was not long before the rooms began to take on an aspect as beautiful as it was homelike.

By preference the Brownings lived very quietly. At the end of fifteen months Mrs. Browning wrote, "Robert has not been out an evening of the fifteen months; but what with music and books and writing and talking, we scarcely know how the days go, it's such a gallop on the grass." March 9, 1849, was born Wiedemann, later known as "Penini" or "Pen" Browning. Coincident with this joy was the grief caused by the death of Browning's mother, a sorrow from which he rallied but slowly. The Florentine life was occasionally varied by summers at Bagni di Lucca, winters in Paris or Rome, and several visits to England. There was also an increasing social life. Americans were especially welcome to the Brownings because, while England was still indifferent to Browning's work, America had given it an appreciative welcome. In March, 1861, Mrs. Browning wrote, "I don't complain for myself of an unappreciative public. *I have no reason.* But just for *that* reason I complain more about Robert . . . In America he is a power, a writer, a poet—he is read, he lives in the hearts of the people."[1]

[1]An interesting corroboration of Mrs. Browning's words is found in the fact that the 1868 edition of Browning's works, by Smith Elder and Co., was reprinted

Among the Americans associated with the Brownings for longer or shorter periods during their life in Florence were two distinguished women, Margaret Fuller Ossoli and Harriet Beecher Stowe. In 1847, George William Curtis spent two days with the Brownings at Vallombrosa, a visit later described in his *Easy Chair*. Mr. Field, who had brought out the American reprint of the two-volume edition of Browning's poems in 1849, was a guest at Casa Guidi in 1852. Charles Sumner writes of "delicious Tuscan evenings" with the Brownings and the Storys in 1859. Mr. Browning's interests in art led to friendships with American artists, among whom were Mr. Page, who painted a successful portrait of Browning; Miss Harriet Hosmer, to whom Mr. and Mrs. Browning finally consented to sit for the "Clasped Hands"; and Hiram Powers. The dearest American friends were, however, Mr. and Mrs. Hawthorne and Mr. and Mrs. Story.

Music and art were among Browning's chief delights in Florence. George William Curtis in describing the trip to Vallombrosa says that it was part of their pleasure to sit in the dusky convent chapel while Browning at the organ "chased a fugue of Master Hughes of Saxe Gotha, or dreamed out upon twilight keys a faint throbbing toccata of Galuppi's." Modeling in clay was even more satisfying as a personal resource. In the autumn of 1860 Mrs. Browning wrote, "Robert has taken to modeling under Mr. Story (at his studio) and is making extraordinary progress, turning to account his studies in anatomy. He has copied already two busts, the young Augustus and the Psyche, and is engaged on another, enchanted with his new trade, working six hours a day."

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as Numbers 1-19 of the *Official Guide of the Chicago and Alton R. R., and Monthly Reprint and Advertiser*, edited by Mr. James Charlton. A copy is in the British Museum. The reprint appeared in 1872-1874. See Mrs. Orr's bibliography.

Some months later she added, "The modeling combines body-work and soul-work, and the more tired he has been, and the more his back ached, poor fellow, the more he has exulted and been happy—*'no, nothing ever made him so happy before.'*" He found, also, an unfailing pleasure in the study of great pictures. And he was a buyer of pictures with a collector's delight in hunting out the work of the unappreciated early Tuscan artists. Mrs. Orr says that he owned at least one picture by each of the obscure artists mentioned in "Old Pictures in Florence."

Mrs. Browning sometimes expressed regret that Browning should give himself so unreservedly in so many directions, because she felt that he had thus too little time and energy left for poetry. Her fear was not without justification, for after the richly productive period from 1841 to 1846, we come upon a space of nine years the only publications of which are, in 1850, *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, a long poem in two parts giving the arguments in favor of Christianity; and, in 1852, an introduction to a collection of letters then supposed to be by Shelley, but since found to be spurious. The essay is nevertheless of importance as an exposition of Browning's theory of poetry, and as an interesting study of Shelley.

In 1855, at the close of this period of nine years, there appeared a collection of fifty-one poems entitled *Men and Women*. In "fundamental brain power," insight, beauty, and mastery of style, these poems show Browning at the highest level of his poetic achievement. It is in these remarkable poems that he brought to perfection a poetic form which he practically invented, the dramatic monologue, a form in which there is but one speaker but which is essentially dramatic in effect. The dramatic quality arises partly from the implied presence of listeners whose

expressions of assent or dissent determine the progress or the abrupt changes of direction of the speaker's words. In "Andrea del Sarto," for example, Lucrezia's smiles and frowns and gestures of impatience are a constant influence, and the poem presents as vivid an interplay of personalities as any scene in a drama. But the implied listener is hardly more than a secondary dramatic element, the chief one being that the speaker talks, as do the characters in a play, out of the demands of the immediate experience, gradually and casually disclosing all the tangled web of influence, all the clashes of will with destiny, of desire with convention, that have led to the crisis depicted. Fra Lippo Lippi gives no consecutive history of his life, only such snatches of it as partially account for his present mad freak, but the strife between his own nature and instinct on the one hand and the conventions and traditions of religious art on the other could hardly be more vividly presented. *In a Balcony,* the one drama in *Men and Women,* has but a fragment of a plot, but in intensity, reality, and passion it excels most of Browning's dramas, and, in spite of its long speeches, has proved effective on the stage.[1] In variety of theme, subject-matter, and verse-form, the poems of *Men and Women* defy classification. Whatever page one turns, there is something novel, stimulating, captivating. All of Browning's Florentine interests are represented here—his love of old pictures and little-known music, his delight in Florence, Venice, Rome, in all Italy, her skies and her landscapes, the vagrants of her streets, her religious ceremonies, her church dignitaries, her scholars. Then there are love-poems in all

[1] A particularly interesting dramatic event was Mrs. Lemoyne's presentation of *In a Balcony* at Wallack's Theater, New York, in the autumn of 1900. Mrs. Lemoyne was the Queen, Otis Skinner was Norbet, and Eleanor Robson was Constance. See *The Bookman,* 12, 387.

tones and tempers, the noblest of them all, "One Word More," being Browning's most direct and personal tribute to his wife. And we see in its keenest form his intellectual delight in subtle disquisition. The doctrine of immortality as it appeals to the mind of the cultured, dissatisfied pagan Cleon; the miracle of Lazarus as it is brooded over by the Arab physician Karshish; the balancing of faith and doubt in the clever casuistry of Bishop Blougram—these are topics to Browning's taste and are treated with skill and mastery. Taken all in all these poems give to the reader a full impression of Browning's characteristic force, the darting, penetrating power of his phrase, the rush and energy and leap of his thought. It is by *Men and Women,* the somewhat similar *Dramatis Personæ,* and the earlier *Dramatic Lyrics* and *Dramatic Romances,* that Browning is most widely and most favorably known.

During the first ten years that the Brownings were in Florence Mrs. Browning's health was so good that she was able to enjoy social and outdoor pleasures to a degree that would have been thought impossible before her marriage. She had also kept up her literary work. A new edition of her poems appeared in 1849; in 1851 she published *Casa Guidi Windows,* poems illustrative of her ardent interest in all that pertained to the fight for Italian freedom; and in 1856 her long-planned verse novel *Aurora Leigh* was completed and published. But soon after this her strength began insensibly to fail and during the last three years of her life she suffered much from repeated bronchial attacks. However, her death, in June, 1861, was entirely unexpected. The Florentines had loved her deeply and had appreciated her utterances in behalf of a free Italy. She was, accordingly, buried in Florence, with "extraordinary demonstrations of respect,"

and the house where she had lived was marked by the municipality with a commemorative tablet.

Browning's wish was to leave Florence at once and to make the new life as unlike the old as possible. He went to London, and after some delay established himself in a house at Warwick Crescent, where he lived till 1887. The first portion of his life in England was one of "unbearable loneliness." He took care of his son, busied himself with a new edition of his wife's poems, read and studied and wrote with feverish intensity, and avoided people. But with the spring of 1863, says Mr. Gosse, "a great change came over Browning's habits. He had shunned all invitations into society, but . . . it suddenly occurred to him that this mode of life was morbid and unworthy," and thereupon he entered into the social, literary, musical, and artistic life of London.

The nine years following 1855 were again a period of small productivity. *Dramatis Personæ* was a slender volume to represent so many years, even though it contained such great poems as "Rabbi Ben Ezra," "A Death in the Desert," and "Abt Vogler." But during this period a long poem, *The Ring and the Book,* had been maturing. In 1860, while still at Casa Guidi, Browning had found at a book-stall the now famous "square old yellow Book," containing the legal record of a famous Roman murder case. He read the account on the way home, and before night had so mastered the details that, as he paced up and down on the terrace in the darkness, he saw the tragedy unfold before him in picture after picture. It was not, however, till 1864 that he definitely set to work on the composition of the poem. It was published in four volumes of three parts each, in the winter and spring of 1868-9. The poem has a novel structure. The story is retold ten times by different persons and with such varia-

tions of fact and opinions and style as are dictated by the knowledge and the character of the speaker. The monologues of Count Guido, who murdered his wife, of Pompilia the young wife, of Caponsacchi the "soldier saint" who endeavored to save her, and of the old Pope, are by far the most interesting portions of the poem, but the whole of it is remarkable, and it justly takes rank as one of England's greatest poems. With the appearance of this book Browning's genius received adequate recognition in high places. *The Athenæum* called it "the *opus magnum* of the generation, not merely beyond all parallel the supremest poetic achievement of the time, but the most precious and profound spiritual treasure that England has possessed since the days of Shakespeare."

The last ten or twelve years of Browning's life were so crowded with interests, occupations, publications, friends, honors, that not even a summary of them can be undertaken here. Mr. Sharp says of this period:

"Everybody wished him to come and dine; and he did his best to gratify Everybody. He saw everything; read all the notable books; kept himself acquainted with the leading contents of the journals and magazines; conducted a large correspondence; read new French, German, and Italian books of mark; read and translated Euripides and Æschylus; knew all the gossip of the literary clubs, the salons, and the studios; was a frequenter of afternoon tea parties; and then, over and above it, he was Browning—the most profoundly subtle mind that has exercised itself in poetry since Shakespeare."

Mr. Henry James in commenting on Browning's rich and ample London period with "its felicities and prosperities of every sort," says that in contemplating "the wonderful Browning . . . the accomplished, saturated, sane, sound man of the London world and the world

of culture," it was impossible not to believe that "he had arrived somehow, for his own deep purposes, at the enjoyment of a double identity," so dissociated were the poet and the "member of society." Phillips Brooks, who met Browning in England in 1865-6, was impressed by his fullness of life and said he was "very like some of the best of Thackeray's London men." In public and on ordinary social occasions Browning is said to have been frank, charming, friendly—"more agreeable," Mary Anderson said, "than distinguished." With intimate friends, however, the poet had quite another sort of charm. "To a single listener," says Mr. Gosse, with whom he was on familiar terms, "the Browning of his own study was to the Browning of a dinner party as a tiger cat is to a domestic cat. In such conversation his natural strength came out. His talk assumed the volume and the tumult of a cascade. His voice rose to a shout, sank to a whisper, ran up and down the gamut of conversational melody. Those whom he was expecting will never forget his welcome, the loud trumpet-note from the other end of the passage, the talk already in full flood at a distance of twenty feet. Then, in his own study or drawing-room, what he loved was to capture his visitor in a low armchair's 'sofa-lap of leather,' and from a most unfair vantage of height to tyrannize, to walk around the victim, in front, behind, on this side, on that, weaving magic circles, now with gesticulating arms thrown high, now groveling on the floor to find some reference in a folio, talking all the while, a redundant turmoil of thoughts, fancies, and reminiscences flowing from those generous lips."

Elsewhere Mr. Gosse summed up his personal impressions of Mr. Browning, as follows:

"I am bound to tell you that I saw a different Brown-

ing from the hero of all the handbooks and 'gospels' which are now in vogue. People are beginning to treat this vehement and honest poet as if he were a sort of Marcus Aurelius and John the Baptist rolled into one. I have just seen a book in which it is proposed that Browning should supersede the Bible, in which it is asserted that a set of his volumes will teach religion better than all the theologies in the world. Well, I did not know that holy monster. . . . What I saw was an unostentatious, keen, active man of the world, one who never failed to give good practical advice in matters of business and conduct, one who loved his friends and certainly hated his enemies; a man alive in every eager passionate nerve of him; a man who loved to discuss people and affairs, and a bit of a gossip; a bit of a partisan, too, and not without his humorous prejudices. He was simple to a high degree, simple in his scrupulous dress, his loud, happy voice, his insatiable curiosity."

Browning's London life was varied by many summer journeyings to French sea-coast towns, to Wales, and to Scotland. But it was seventeen years after the death of his wife before he could bring himself to revisit Italy. Even then he avoided Florence. He took his sister to Northern Italy; and Asolo and Venice became the towns around which their affections centered. Two American friends, Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore, and Mrs. Arthur Bronson,[1] contributed to the happiness of these Italian sojourns. In 1888 Browning's son, who had married an American girl, bought the Palazzo Rezzonico in Venice, so that Browning had an additional personal reason for his trip to Venice in 1889. He was well, and he took great pleasure in his son's admirably planned restoration of the old

[1]Mrs. Bronson has given a vivid picture of the Brownings at Asolo and at Venice in the *Century Magazine* for 1900 and 1902.

Venetian palace. He worked, walked, talked with nearly normal vigor. But a bronchial attack proved more than his weakened heart could withstand, and he died peacefully, almost painlessly, in his son's home on December 12, 1889. On the day of his death his last book, *Asolando,* was published, so that his brave-hearted "Epilogue" was really his valediction to this and his heroic greeting to another world. He could "greet the unseen with a cheer," because in thought and act he was

> One who never turned his back but marched breast
> forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong
> would triumph,
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake.

Browning was buried in Westminster Abbey on the last day of the year. The most pathetic element of the imposing ceremonies was the singing of Mrs. Browning's poem, "He Giveth His Beloved Sleep."

THE POETRY OF BROWNING

Before entering upon a discussion of Browning's poetry it will be of interest to note briefly some of the more striking general characteristics of the English literature contemporary with his work. From *Pauline* to *Asolando* is over half a century, but as a central and especially significant portion of Browning's career we may take the three decades from 1841, when he began the *Bells and Pomegranates* series, to 1869, when *The Ring and the Book* appeared, for these years include all of his dramas and most of the poetry on which his fame rests. A survey of

this period at once reveals the predominance of fiction. Within these years come nearly all the novels of Charles Dickens, of William Makepeace Thackeray, of Charlotte Brontë, of Wilkie Collins, of Charles Kingsley, of Mrs. Gaskell, of Anthony Trollope, of George Macdonald, of Charles Reade, much of the work of Bulwer Lytton, all the novels of George Eliot except *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda,* and the earliest of George Meredith's books. This is a notable showing. No previous period in English literature had presented anything like so wide a range in fiction or had brought forward so large a number of novels of the first rank. These years were equally rich in essays, including much of Carlyle's work, all of Macaulay's except the early "Essay on Milton," the religious polemics of Frederick Dennison Maurice and John Henry Newman, nearly all of Ruskin's discussions of art and social history, most of Leigh Hunt's literary criticism, and Matthew Arnold's important early critical essays. This, too, is a notable showing. But if we turn to the two realms in which Browning excelled, poetry and drama, we find different conditions. During the central period of his career, there was, aside from his own work, not a single important drama published. The theaters were prosperous, but they brought out only old plays or new ones of inferior rank. In poetry, too, if we set aside the great names of Tennyson and Browning, the period was neither rich nor varied. During Browning's first great productive period, 1841-46, the only other poems of note were Tennyson's two volumes in 1842. In the nine years from 1846 to *Men and Women* in 1855, the chief poems were Tennyson's *The Princess, In Memoriam,* and *Maud,* for though Wordsworth's *Prelude* was one of the greatest publications of the mid-century, it was written years before, and can hardly be counted as belonging to this era. There

are, during the decade, many poems of secondary rank, the most important of them being Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* and *Aurora Leigh,* but besides Tennyson and Browning, the only poet of high rank is Matthew Arnold, whose slender volumes voice the doubts and difficulties of the age as Browning's poems voice its optimism. In the fourteen years between *Men and Women* and *The Ring and the Book* poets of a new kind appear; William Morris's *Defense of Guinevere, The Life and Death of Jason* and *The Earthly Paradise,* and Swinburne's early poems are alien to the work of Browning in form, subject-matter, and ideals. The fact is, the more definitely we try to place Browning in his literary environment the more distinctly do we perceive that he was *sui generis* among his contemporaries. He combined in striking fashion the intensity of the poet and the strong social sense of the prose writer.

It seems also wise to glance at the outset at a few of the main criticisms that have been made on Browning's poetry, for the result of his marked originality is that no poet of the time has been so greatly praised and blamed.

A natural first topic is his really famous "obscurity." This obscurity is variously ascribed to a diction unduly learned, or almost unintelligibly colloquial, or grotesquely inventive; to figures of speech drawn from sources too unfamiliar or elaborated to the point of confusion; to sentences complicated by startling inversions, by double parentheses, by broken constructions, or by a grammatical structure defying analysis. It would be quite possible to illustrate each of these points from Browning's works, and it cannot be denied that his poetry is sometimes needlessly and inexcusably hard reading. But in reality the difficulties in his poems come less from stylistic defects than from the subject matter. What Mr. Chesterton calls

Browning's love for "the holes and corners of history," leads him to the use of much unfamiliar detail. A large part of the difficulty in reading *Sordello* arises from the fact that all Browning's accumulated knowledge of medieval Italy is there poured forth in an allusive, taken-for-granted manner, till even the practiced reader turns away perplexed and overwhelmed. So, too, "Old Pictures in Florence," "Pictor Ignotus," and "Fra Lippo Lippi" assume on the part of the reader a minute familiarity with early Florentine art. Occasionally the poems demand an exceptional technical knowledge of some sort, as in "Abt Vogler," where only a trained musician can fully understand the terminology. Many even of the minor poems belong to realms of thought and experience so remote that only by distinct effort do we transport ourselves thither. It would, for instance, be absurd to call "Two in the Campagna" difficult in form or phrasing, yet it narrates an experience intelligible only to those who have loved deeply but have found in the very heart of that love a baffling sense of inevitable personal isolation. Sometimes the difficulty arises from the extreme subtlety of the thought. "Evelyn Hope," the simplest of poems in expression, presents novel and elusive ideas. Mr. Chesterton ingeniously ascribes Browning's obscurity to "intellectual humility," to an assumption that his readers were in possession of a native endowment and an acquired intellectual wealth on a par with his own; but the defense seems rather forced. Mrs. Browning gave one of the best brief analyses of Mr. Browning's obscurity. He had been attacked as being "misty" and she wrote to him, "You never *are* misty, not even in 'Sordello'—never vague. Your graver cuts deep, sharp lines, always—and there is an extra distinctness in your images and thoughts, from the midst of which, crossing each other infinitely, the general significance seems to escape." But the classic

defense of Browning from this point of view may be found in Swinburne's Introduction to Chapman's *Poems*:

"The difficulty found by many in certain of Mr. Browning's works arises from a quality the very reverse of that which produces obscurity, properly so-called. Obscurity is the natural product of turbid forces and confused ideas; of a feeble and clouded or of a vigorous but unfixed and chaotic intellect. . . . Now if there is any great quality more perceptible than another in Mr. Browning's intellect it is his decisive and incisive faculty of thought, his sureness and intensity of perception, his rapid and trenchant resolution of aim. . . . The very essence of Mr. Browning's aim and method, as exhibited in the ripest fruits of his intelligence, is such as implies above all other things the possession of a quality the very opposite of obscurity—a faculty of spiritual illumination rapid and intense and subtle as lightning, which brings to bear upon its object by way of direct and vivid illustration every symbol and every detail on which its light is flashed in passing." Browning has himself a word to say on this topic. He wrote to a friend:

"I can have little doubt that my writing has been in the main too hard for many I should have been pleased to communicate with; but I never designedly tried to puzzle people as some of my critics have supposed. On the other hand, I never pretended to offer such literature as should be a substitute for a cigar or a game at dominoes to an idle man. So, perhaps, on the whole, I get my deserts, and something over—not a crowd but a few I value more."

A second charge not infrequently brought against Browning's verse is that it is harsh, and at times even ugly. This charge, like that of obscurity, cannot be wholly denied. The harshness results from incorrect rhymes, from irregular movement of the verse, or from difficult

combinations of vowels and consonants. No reader of Browning's poems can fail to have been impressed by his intellectual agility in matching odd rhymes. In dash and originality his rhymes out-rank even those in Butler's *Hudibras* and Lowell's *Fable for Critics*. We find in *Pacchiarotto*, for instance, many rhymes of the gayest most freakish, most grotesque character—"monkey, one key," "prelude, hell-hued," "stubborn, cub-born," "*was* hard, hazard," all occur in a single stanza. An example of exceptional facility in rhyming is found in "Through the Metidja," where, without repetition of words and without forcing of the sense thirty-six words rhyme with "ride." It cannot be denied that this remarkable facility led Browning occasionally into the use of odd rhymes in poems where no light or comic effect was intended; but a detailed study of his rhymes[1] shows that the proportion of incorrect rhymes is really small, that the grotesque rhymes are more striking than numerous, and that they are usually in places where they are dramatically appropriate. His use of harsh words and sound-blendings is also often to be justified on the ground of their appropriateness to the idea. Compare, for instance, the flowing, easy words, the musical linking of sounds, in the first stanza of "Love Among the Ruins" with the harsh words, harshly combined, in the twelfth and thirteenth stanzas of "Childe Roland." Both effects are artistic because each sort of combination is in response to the nature of the thought. It is true that sometimes, perhaps not infrequently, the verse is rugged or uncouth where the sense does not call for such form, and there are lines that not only remind us of De Quincey's dictum that certain words should be "boiled before they are eaten," but which have no metrical flow at all; they defy any sort of scansion and

[1]See Miss E. M. Clark in *Poet-Lore*, Volume II, page 480 (1890).

read like rough prose. But a poet has a right of appeal to the sum of his manifest excellencies rather than to his defects, and if we take Browning's best work we find a harmony of movement superior in musical effect to a more technically regular meter. In many poems the meter is indissolubly fused with the pictures, the ideas, the events. Take, for instance, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," where the hurry-skurry of the verse is in complete harmony with the quaint, rapid tale. The hoof-beats of galloping horses is heard all through "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix." The slow march, the stately chant, are rhythmically present throughout "A Grammarian's Funeral." In "The Flight of the Duchess" the change from the rough servitor's narrative to the incantation of the gypsy-queen is as exquisitely marked in the metrical movement and in the rhymes as it is in the diction and tone of thought. Many other examples might be cited. Mr. Brinton, who has made a detailed and competent study of Browning's verse, gives his final opinion in these words: "In the volumes of Browning I maintain that we find so many instances of profound insight into verbal harmonies, such singular strength of poetic grouping, and such a marvelous grasp of the rhythmic properties of the English language that we must assign to him a rank second to no English poet of this century."[1]

A third charge brought against Browning's art is that he makes all his characters talk "Browningese"; that is, that he endows all of them with the power to use such words and sentences and thought processes as are natural to him and to him only. Mr. Stedman in emphasizing this characteristic of the poet says of *Pippa Passes*: "The usual fault is present—the characters, whether students,

[1] *Poet-Lore*, Volume II, page 246 (1890).

peasants, or soldiers, all talk like sages; Pippa reasons like a Paracelsus in pantalettes." It is, of course, obvious at the first glance that there is a lack of verisimilitude in Pippa's rich and beautiful soliloquies. Certainly no fourteen-year-old mill girl could so describe a sunrise, or play so brilliantly with a sunbeam in a water-basin, or outline so cleverly the stories of the happiest four in Asolo. The same is true of Phene's long speech to Jules; no untutored girl brought up in degradation, could present such thoughts in such words. When we analyze Browning's way of presenting a character, however, we find that the lack of verisimilitude is usually external and has to do chiefly with expression. Browning works on the fundamental assumption that he has a poetic right to make all sorts of people articulate. He lends his mind out in the service of their thoughts and feelings. He makes people reveal themselves by putting into words their elusive, dim, tangled, and even unrecognized motives and hopes and joys and despairs. He sums up in the speeches all the potentialities of the situation. All the significance latent in the type of character and environment is somehow heightened and symbolized. All this is put in his own highly individual diction. Yet it can hardly be said that he violates poetic realism in the deeper sense, for he never puts a halo around a situation, never goes counter to its potentialities. Instead he strikes fire from it. He shows what is actually in the situation, but at white heat and laid bare to its center. When this method has once been recognized, discomfort on the score of lack of verisimilitude practically disappears, and the reader yields himself to the joy of the rich, subtle, and stimulating analysis.

We may now turn to a consideration of the subject-matter and the main ideas of Browning's poetry. From whatever point of view we regard his work, we find that

ultimately the emphasis rests on the same great central fact, the supremacy of his interest in human nature. This dominating interest is shown, for instance, by a study of his treatment of physical nature. To be sure, no one can read his poems without recognizing the truth that his use of natural facts is distinctive in kind and very stimulating. A mere reference to the pictures of the sky in *Pippa Passes,* the vivid descriptions of fruits and flowers in "An Englishman in Italy," the remarkable studies of small animal life in "Saul" and "Caliban upon Setebos," of birds in "Home-Thoughts, from Abroad," of insects in the first part of *Paracelsus* and in many later poems, suffices to show that in mature life he did not lose the keenness of observation and interest characteristic of his youth. Yet it is also evident that his use of nature by way of direct description, or even as illustrative material, is far less in amount than that of other notable nineteenth century poets. He cares much less for "the river's line, the mountains round it and the sky above" than for the "figures of man, woman, and child these are frame to." Where nature is drawn upon, it is almost invariably in complete subordination to some human interest, and its literary form is almost always that of casual mention, background, or similitude, and the first of these is the most frequent. Furthermore, nearly all these passages are a mere statement of observed fact without comment or interpretation. There is one great passage in *Paracelsus* where the joy of God in the act of creation is depicted; there are occasional references to the delight of man in the external world; and now and then, as in "By the Fireside," man and nature are intimately fused; but such conceptions rarely occur. In Browning's poetry the boundary lines between man and nature are clearly marked. In *Paracelsus* he definitely protests against man's way of reading his own moods into nature, and of

attributing to her his own qualities and emotions. He also always accounts man, if he has truly entered into his spiritual heritage, as consciously superior to nature. The troubadour Eglamour, in *Sordello,* says that man shrinks to naught if matched with a quiet sea or sky, but Browning calls that Eglamour's "false thought." To Browning, nature was to be studied, enjoyed, and used, but it was not as to Keats a realm of enchantment; or as to Wordsworth the realm where alone the divine and the human could pass the boundaries of sense and meet; or as to Matthew Arnold a refuge from pain and disillusionment. Browning regards the world about him more in the sane, unsentimental, straightforward, intelligible way of Chaucer or of Shakespeare. The mystical elements in Wordsworth's feeling for nature were foreign to Browning's mind. An instructive comparison might be made between Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" and Browning's "Prologue to Asolando." The poems have the same starting point. Each one attributes sadness to the poet's old age, and each gives as a cause of the sadness the inevitable fading of the glory with which all nature was invested to the eye of his youth. But here the resemblance ends. Wordsworth believes that the youthful vision was a divine revelation to be regained when the round of existence should be completed by a return to his immortal home, and on the memory of that vision he founded his faith in a future life. But Browning welcomed the loss of the vision. Objects had been to him "palpably fire-clothed"; but with the loss of "flame" there was a gain in reality. The vision had enthralled and subjugated him; but with the sight of "a naked world" he had become conscious of things as they are, and he rejoiced in a justness of perception that declared what were to him the two great facts of life, the

power and beauty of God, and the glory of the human soul. On these, not on nature, he put his stress.

Browning's paramount interest in human nature is further illustrated by his poems on the various arts. Of music, painting, and sculpture he has written with the intimate and minute knowledge of a specialist in each art. He is familiar with implements and materials, with the tricks of the trade, the talk of the studios; but, after all, the art as an art is of much less interest to him than is the worker. The process and even the completed product are in Browning's view important only in so far as they reveal or affect the artist, the musician, the sculptor, or some phase of life. In such poems as "Abt Vogler," "Fra Lippo Lippi," "Andrea del Sarto," we are conscious not so much of music and pictures as of the secret springs of failure, the divine despairs and discontents, the aspirations, the creative ecstasies, of the men who wrought in these realms. Andrea del Sarto's art is not the real theme of the poem bearing his name. It is, rather, his character, of which his art is an expression. The central fact of the poem is the recognition that a soul morally impoverished cannot, even with well-nigh perfect technique, produce great work, while, even with faulty technique, a setting of the soul to grand issues will secure transcendent meanings. So, too, with Abt Vogler. His music is not of the greatest, but our concern is with the musician who, through the completeness of his spiritual absorption in music, is conducted into a realm of experience beyond that of speech or even of articulate thought.

Another distinctly human aspect of art interests Browning, and that is its power to represent and so to recall a vanished civilization. Greek statues, the devotional pictures of the early Florentines, the work of the later Italian realists, stand, in "Old Pictures in Florence," as repre-

sentatives of the life and thought that produced them. In "A Toccata of Galuppi's" the music revivifies the superficial gaiety, the undertone of fear, in the life of eighteenth century Venice. Highly significant in this connection are the poems in which he traces the evolution of art. Running through "Old Pictures in Florence" and "Fra Lippo Lippi" we find an ordered statement of the chief changes in the ideals of art as Browning saw them. The Greeks, we are told, had produced in sculpture the most beautiful representations of the human body. But if their successors had been content merely to admire this perfect achievement, they would have purchased satisfaction at the price of their own arrested development. Progress came only when, in the dawn of Italian art, men turned from Greek perfection, from the supremely beautiful but limited representations of the human body, to an attempt to paint the invisible, the spiritual side of man's nature. The work of these artists was great because it was not imitative and because it stretched toward an unending and ideal future. But the idealistic and aspiring temper of early Tuscan art had the defects of its qualities. Its spiritual ecstasy once conventionalized and reduced to a formula led to unreality, and, if not to untruth, at least to an unwholesome ignoring of a part of truth. There was, therefore, an inevitable reaction to the naturalism described with such verve and gusto by Fra Lippo Lippi. But this is, after all, social history in terms of art, and to Browning what has happened in painting is of value chiefly as showing concretely what has happened in the mind of man.

From the instances already cited it is apparent that Browning's interest centered, not in abstract or theoretical discussions of human problems, but in the individuals who

face the problems. In this point Browning is sharply distinguished from his poetic contemporaries as a class. They felt deeply "all the weary weight of this unintelligible world," so deeply that while they gave much thought to ideals of social amelioration, few of them presented individuals with any dramatic distinctness. Browning stands practically by himself in the nineteenth century as the poet who gives us both the "doubter and the doubt," who is able to join with an impressive statement of the hopes and fears of man, an equally impressive sequence of individual men and women. In this he harks back to the broad inclusiveness of the Elizabethan dramatists. In contemporary literature, his nearest congeners are in fiction, not in poetry.

The great number and variety of Browning's characters can be illustrated in different ways. We might, for instance, note how many nationalities are represented. The personages in "Strafford" and the "Cavalier Tunes" are Englishmen from the time of the Civil War. "Clive" is a true story of the Indian Empire. We have from Italian life the numerous characters in *Sordello,* "Fra Lippo Lippi," "Pictor Ignotus," "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church," "My Last Duchess," *The Ring and the Book,* "A Grammarian's Funeral," "Up at a Villa—Down in the City," "In a Gondola," and many more. "Count Gismond" and "Hervé Riel" are French stories. *Paracelsus* and "Abt Vogler" are of German origin. *Balaustion's Adventure, Aristophanes' Apology,* "Pheidippides," and "Echetlos" celebrate Greek thought and adventure. Very important poems such as "Saul" and "Rabbi Ben Ezra," have to do with Jewish life. And unlike Shakespeare, who is not concerned with making Julius Cæsar a Roman or Duke Theseus a Greek, Brown-

ing brings to the creation of each of these widely divergent characters, a detailed knowledge of the special habits of life and thought of the nation or race concerned. He represents also many kinds of human interest. We find in his poems seekers after knowledge such as Paracelsus, who takes all thought and fact as his domain; or such as the Grammarian, who found Greek particles too wide a realm; or such as the pedant Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis, whose learned rubbish cumbers the land. There are likewise those who grope after the truths of religion from Caliban on his island to the learned physician Karshish and the highly cultured Cleon; those who have the full vision from John to Rabbi Ben Erza; those who juggle with terms and creeds as does Bishop Blougram; and out and out frauds like Sludge the Medium. The church is represented by many men dissimilar in endowments, tastes, spiritual experiences, and aims. There are Italian prelates of every sort, from the worldly-minded Bishop of St. Praxed's, occupied in death with vain thoughts of lapis-lazuli and pure Latin, to the "soldier-saint," Caponsacchi, who saved Pompilia, and the wise old Pope who pronounced Guido's doom; from the unworthy priest in the Spanish Cloister to the very human, kindly Pope in "The Bean Feast." And from all these it is far down the ages to the evangelical parish priest of *The Inn Album,* that "purblind honest drudge," who, the deeper to impress his flock, painted heaven dimly but "made hell distinct." There are many artists, many musicians. There are poets from Aprile in *Paracelsus,* and the troubadours Eglamour and Sordello, to Keats and Shelley. The extremes of social life are given. There are the street-girls in *Pippa Passes* and there are kings and queens with royal retinues. There are statesmen, and warriors, and seekers

after romantic adventure. There are haughty aristocrats of cold and cruel natures, and there are obscure but high-hearted doers of heroic deeds. Browning's dictum, "Study man, man, whatever the issue," led him into a world wider than that known by any other poet of his time, and akin, as has been pointed out, to that of the great writers of fiction. As an observer of human life he was not unlike his poor poet of Valladolid who, with his "scrutinizing hat," went about the streets, absorbed in watching all kinds of people, all sorts of occupations, "scenting the world, looking it full in the face." He chose to set forth "the wants and ways" of actual life. He summed up his work in the "Epilogue to Pacchiarotto":

> Man's thoughts and loves and hates!
> Earth is my vineyard, these grew there:
> From grape of the ground I made or marred
> My vintage.

It is further apparent that Browning's characters are never merely types, but must always be reckoned with as individuals. It was his belief that no two beings were ever made similar in head and heart; hence, even where there are external similarities the essential elements are strongly differentiated. Take, for instance, three poems in which the situations are not unlike. In "My Last Duchess," "The Flight of the Duchess," and *The Ring and the Book,* we have a portrayal of three men of high lineage, but cold, egotistic, cruel, who have married very young and lovely women over whom the custom of the times gives them absolute power. But there the likeness ends. We cannot for a moment class together the pol-

ished, æsthetic, well-bred aristocrat of the first poem, the absurd little popinjay of the second, and the "tiger-cat" of the third. Less strongly, but as clearly are the wives differentiated. To the innocent gaiety of heart, the bright, sweet friendliness of the hapless lady in "My Last Duchess" must be added for the lady in "The Flight of the Duchess" a native force of character which, when roused by the call of the gypsy-queen, enables her to break the yoke imposed on her by the Duke and his mother and go forth into a life of adventure, freedom, and love. The delicate, flower-like Pompilia in *The Ring and the Book* has also power to initiate and carry through a plan of escape, but her incentive is no call to romantic freedom. Her passive endurance changes to active revolt only when motive and energy are supplied by her love for her child. Or take Pippa and Phene in *Pippa Passes,* two beautiful young girls brought up in dangerous and evil surroundings, but both innately pure. In character and experience they are, however, as unlike as two girls could be. Phene, undeveloped in mind and heart, the easily duped agent of a cruel trick, appeals to us by her slow, incredulous, but eager response to goodness and aspiration, the tremulous opening of her soul to love. But Pippa, with her observant love of nature, her gay, sportive, winsome fancies, her imaginative sympathy with the lives of others, her knowledge of good and evil, her poise, her bright steadiness of soul, carries us into a different and much more highly evolved world of thought and feeling. So we might go through the great assemblage of Browning's characters to find that each one stands out by himself as a person with his own qualities, possibilities, and problems.

In all this portrayal of individuals the emphasis is on things of the mind and heart. In these realms Browning found nothing alien or uninteresting. From point to point his poetry illustrates what he said in his comment on *Sordello*, "My stress lay on the incidents in the development of a human soul; little else is worth study." In all his poetry environment is of importance only in so far as it is the stuff on which the soul works. It is "the subtle thing called spirit," it is "the soul's world" to which he devotes himself.

It is only from a study of Browning's many characters that we may arrive at a statement of some of the distinguishing features of his philosophy of life. And any such statements must be made with extreme caution because of his dramatic method. He utters this caution himself when he says of his poems, "Their contents are always dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary people." Yet it is possible, by taking the general trend and scope of his work, to make justifiable deductions concerning the dominant ideas in the rich field of his poetry and drama.

In Browning's philosophy of life, words of especial significance are "growth" and "progress." Domizia in *Luria* says:

> How inexhaustibly the spirit grows!
> One object, she seemed erewhile born to reach
> With her whole energies and die content—
> So like a wall at the world's edge is stood,
> With naught beyond to live for—is that reached?—
> Already are new undreamed energies
> Outgrowing under, and extending farther
> To a new object.

So, too, John in "A Death in the Desert" sums up his belief in the line,

> I say that man was made to grow, not stop.

Growth here and growth hereafter are the essential elements of Browning's creed. And there is no other poet in whom all kinds of thinking and doing are so uniformly tested by their outcome in the growth of the soul. Does joy stimulate to fuller life; does suffering bring out moral qualities; do obstacles develop energy; do sharp temptations become a source of strength and assured soldiership; does knowledge of evil lead to a new exaltation of good; does sin lead to self-knowledge and so to regeneration? Then all these are ministers of grace, for through them the soul has reached greater heights and fuller life. Whatever bids the soul "nor stand nor sit, but go" is to be welcomed. The cost of this growth may be great, but the advances of spirit are represented as worth any sacrifice. The lady in "The Flight of the Duchess" goes from splendor and ease to hardship and obscurity, but she wins freedom of thought and of act and the opportunity to test the qualities of her soul. In *Pippa Passes* Sebald might have had love and wealth, Jules might have attained fame along the conventional path marked out for him by the Monsignor, Luigi had the prospect of an easy life and happy love, the Monsignor might have had enhanced honor from the church into whose coffers he could have turned great revenues. But instead each responds in turn to Pippa's songs; Sebald gains a true view of sin, Jules gets a new conception of service and attainment, Luigi's wavering purpose of self-sacrifice for his country's good is strengthened, the Monsignor is held back from connivance at a crime. In all these cases the external loss

is as nothing compared to the gain in spiritual knowledge and energy.

Contact with magnetic and superior personalities is a way of growth particularly noted by Browning. There are men, he says, who bring new feeling fresh from God, and whose life "reteaches us what life should be, what faith is, loyalty and simpleness." Pompilia says of Caponsacchi:

> Through such souls alone
> God stooping shows sufficient of his light
> For us i' the dark to rise by.

The highest souls are "seers" in the noblest sense and they "impart the gift of seeing to the rest." But the helpful personality need not be great in knowledge or rank. In Pippa Browning emphasizes the power of unconscious goodness in clarifying the spiritual vision of others and in thus stimulating to right action. And in David he shows the power of poetic charm, innocence, and eager love to drive away from another heart a mood of black despair.

But outside influences are, after all, says Browning, of secondary importance. They can, at best, do no more than stimulate and guide. When Andrea del Sarto attributes his general lowering of ideals and power to the influence of Lucrezia, he evades the real issue. Incentives must come from the soul's self. Growth is dependent on personal struggle. Man is, by his very nature,

> forced to try and make, else fail to grow—
> Formed to rise, reach at, if not grasp and gain
> The good beyond him—which attempt is growth.

So, also, is it better that youth

> should strive, through acts uncouth,
> Toward making, than repose on aught found made.

It is in the independence and originality of such striving that the soul discovers and frees its innate potentialities.

An inevitable corollary of this idea of progress is the emphasis put upon aspiration as a habit of the mind. The pursuit of an ideal, a divine discontent with present accomplishment, are enjoined upon man. The gleams of heaven on earth are not meant to be permanent or satisfying, but only to sting man into hunger for full light. When a human being has achieved to the full extent of his perceptions or aspirations, he has, thinks Browning, met with the greatest possible disaster, that of arrested development. Man's powers should ever climb new heights. For his soul's health he should always see "a flying point of bliss remote, a happiness in store afar, a sphere of distant glory." "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" According to this ideal, man's conception of good is ever changing and ever widening and hence never in this life to be fully attained; yet the condition of growth is that he have an unmeasured thirst for good and that he pursue it with unquenchable ardor.

The importance of love as one of the most effective agencies in spiritual growth is stated and restated in Browning's poetry and by exceedingly diverse characters. The Queen in *In a Balcony* turns away from her lonely splendor to exclaim,

> There is no good of life but love—but love!
> What else looks good is some shade flung from love;
> Love gilds it, gives it worth.

The Duchess learns from the gypsy

How love is the only good in the world.

The famous singer in "Dis Aliter Visum" knows that art, verse, music, count as naught beside "love found, gained, and kept." Browning seems to regard almost any genuine love as a means of opening out the nature to fuller self-knowledge, to wider sympathies, and to increased power of action. Hence he condemns all cautious calculation of obstacles, all dwelling upon conventional difficulties, in the path of those who have clearly seen "the love-way." Hence even love unrequited is counted of inestimable value. In *Colombe's Birthday* Valence says,

> Is the knowledge of her, naught? the memory, naught?
> —Lady, should such an one have looked on you,
> Ne'er wrong yourself so far as quote the world
> And say, love can go unrequited here!
> You will have blessed him to his whole life's end—
> Low passions hindered, baser cares kept back,
> All goodness cherished where you dwelt—and dwell.

But the love of man and woman is not the only sort. A part of the value of this individual relationship is that it may be regarded as a revelation and symbol of the spirit of all-embracing sympathy whereby mankind should be ruled. When Paracelsus analyzes his life he ascribes his failure to the fact that he has sought knowledge to the exclusion of all else; he finally came to see that knowledge, however profound, is of itself barren of satisfaction. He had meant to serve men by revealing truth to them, but

he found that real service is based on the understanding given by love. In self condemnation he says,

> In my own heart love had not been made wise
> To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,
> To know even hate is but a mask of love's.
> To see a good in evil, and a hope
> In ill-success; to sympathize, be proud
> Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
> Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
> Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts;
> All with a touch of nobleness, despite
> Their error, upward tending all though weak.

Browning's conception of the function and power of love is based on his belief in its divine origin. Twice at least, in "Easter Day" and "Saul," his characters work out from an overpowering recognition of God's omniscience and omnipotence to a final recognition that his love is equal in scope with his power and knowledge. And he counts human service as most complete when, as in David before Saul, it reaches out to God's love and recruits its failing forces from the divine source.

Underlying Browning's doctrine of the value of love, and his doctrine of progress and aspiration, is his belief in personal immortality. When he was charged with being strongly against Darwin, with rejecting the truths of science and regretting its advance, he answered that the idea of a progressive development from senseless matter until man's appearance had been a familiar conception to him from the beginning, but he reiterated his constant faith in creative intelligence acting on matter but not

resulting from it. "Soul," he said, "is not matter, nor from matter, but above." Two assumptions which though not susceptible of proof he regards as "inescapable," are the existence of creative intelligence and of "the subtle thing called spirit." When he argues out the question of the immortality of this spirit, as in *La Saisiaz,* he admits the subjective character of the evidence; but when he speaks spontaneously out of his own feeling or experience, it is with positive belief in life after death. To Mr. Sharp he said, "Death, death! It is this harping on death that I do despise so much! Why, *amico mio,* you know as well as I that death is life, just as our daily, our momentarily dying body is none the less alive and ever recruiting new forces of existence. Without death which is our crape-like church-yardy word for change, for growth, there could be no prolongation of what we call life. Pshaw, it is foolish to argue upon such a thing, even. For myself, I deny death as an end of everything. Never say of me that I am dead!" When his wife died he wrote in her Testament these words from Dante, "Thus I believe, thus I affirm, thus I am certain it is, that from this life I shall pass to another better there where that lady lives of whom my soul was enamored." This faith in life after death explains much of Browning's philosophy. The source of the pagan Cleon's profound discouragement was the fact that man should be dowered with "joy-hunger," should be given the ability to perceive and comprehend splendor and breadth of experience, but should, through the straitness of human limitations, be held back from satisfaction and achievement, and should be left to die thus dazzled, thus baffled. The secret of Browning's optimism, on the other

hand, is his belief that in heaven the soul is freed from limitations, and blossoms out into capabilities of joy and of activity beyond anything suggested by the most golden dreams of earth. To him all life is a unit, beginning here and destined to unimaginable development hereafter. Earth is regarded as a place of tutelage where man may learn to set foot on some one path to heaven. And no work begun here shall ever pause for death. Even apparent failure here counts for little so the quest be not abandoned. Each of us may, as Abt Vogler, look without despair on the broken arcs of earth if his faith reveals the perfect round in heaven.

From any prolonged study of Browning's poetry we become conscious of certain dominant qualities of style that may be thought of quite apart from his themes or message. That his style has the defect of its qualities has already been pointed out. Here we may appropriately indicate those qualities as positive elements of his power. His diction, rich alike in the most learned words and the most colloquial, is responsive to all demands. His power of phrasing runs the whole gamut from the most pellucid simplicity to the most triumphant originality. His figures of speech, drawn from all realms, are penetrating in quality, of startling aptness. Equally characteristic is his versification, varying as it does from passages of melodic smoothness and grace to lines as strident, broken, and harsh as the thought they dramatically reflect. In narration, whether in the brilliant rapidity and ease of a short poem like "Hervé Riel" or in the sustained flow of a long story like that of Pompilia, we find unusual skill. In disquisition, in the presentation of complicated and elusive intellectual processes, there is a quite un-

matched agility and dexterity. Probably no two forms of poetry contain more of Browning's most noteworthy work than the lyric, especially the reflective love lyric, and that form which is distinctively his own, the dramatic monologue. In his best poems in this last form he has no competitor. It is in the presentation of character through the medium of dramatic monologue that he most fully reveals the unerring precision of his analysis, his lightning glance into the heart of a mystery, the ease with which he tracks a motive or mood or thought to its last hiding place, and his consequent passion and fire of sympathy or scorn.

Finally, whether we consider Browning's style or subject matter or philosophy of life, we become growingly conscious of his force. The "clear Virgilian line" of Tennyson is the outcome of a nature instinctively aristocratic and aloof. Browning is out in the thick of the fight and almost vociferously demands a hearing. Whatever makes his thought clear, vivid, active, forcible, seems to him, however prosaic it may appear at first glance, proper poetic material. The immediate effect of his verse is the rousing of the mind to great issues. His tremendous sincerity results in a dispelling of mists, a stripping off of husks. His demand for the truth is a trumpet note of challenge to our doubt or fear or indifference. His penetrating study of human problems leads to an inevitable widening of the horizon of comprehension and sympathy on the part of his readers. And his courage and optimism constitute an inspiration and stimulus of an uncommonly virile sort.

It has been said that Browning is "not a poet, but a literature," and in work so vast and varied that it can be thus characterized there must be wide extremes of

value. It is almost certain that portions of his work cannot live. They are too difficult, too unliterary. But in the portions where great thought finds adequate form, the product is a priceless gift and one not equaled by any other poet of his age.

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May 7,	1812.	Robert Browning born in Camberwell, London.
	1824.	*Incondita* ready for publication.
	1825.	Shelley and Keats read.
	1826.	Left Mr. Ready's school.
	1833.	*Pauline* published anonymously.
	1833-4.	Travels in Russia and Italy.
	1835.	*Paracelsus.*
	1837.	*Strafford.* Acted May 1, 1837, Covent Garden.
	1840.	*Sordello.*
	1841-6.	*Bells and Pomegranates.*
	1841.	No. I. *Pippa Passes.*
	1842.	No. II. *King Victor and King Charles.*
	1842.	No. III. *Dramatic Lyrics.*
	1843.	No. IV. *The Return of the Druses.*
	1843.	No. V. *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.* Acted Feb. 11, 1843, Drury Lane.
	1844.	No. VI. *Colombe's Birthday.* Acted, April 25, 1853, Haymarket.
	1845.	No. VII. *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics.*
	1846.	No. VIII. *Luria* and *A Soul's Tragedy.*
Jan. 10,	1845.	Correspondence between Mr. Browning and Miss Barrett begun.
May 20,	1845.	Their first meeting.
Sept. 12,	1846.	Their marriage at Marylebone Church, London.
Oct.	1846.	to April, 1847. In Pisa.
April 20,	1847.	Arrival at Florence.

May	1848.	Settled in permanent home at Casa Guidi.
	1849.	*Poems by Robert Browning.* Two volumes.
March 9,	1849.	Birth of Wiedemann (or "Penini") Browning.
March	1849.	Death of Browning's mother.
	1850.	*Christmas Eve and Easter Day.*
June	1851.	Mrs. Browning's *Casa Guidi Windows.*
	1852.	*Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* With an introductory essay by Robert Browning.
	1855.	*Men and Women.* In two volumes.
Oct.	1856.	Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh.*
June	1860.	Browning found the "Yellow Book."
June 29,	1861.	Mrs. Browning died. She was buried in Florence.
July	1861	Browning left Florence.
	1862.	Established himself at 19 Warwick Crescent, London, where he lived twenty-five years.
	1863.	*The Poetical Works of Robert Browning.* In three volumes. Chapman and Hall.
	1863.	*Selections from the Poetical Works of Robert Browning.* [Editors, B. W. Proctor and John Forster.]
	1864.	*Dramatis Personæ.*
	1866.	Browning's father died and Sarianna came to live with her brother.
	1868.	*The Poetical Works of Robert Browning.* In six volumes. Smith, Elder and Company.
	1868-9.	*The Ring and the Book.* In four volumes.

	1871.	*Balaustion's Adventure.*
	1871.	*Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, Saviour of Society.*
	1872.	*Fifine at the Fair.*
	1873.	*Red Cotton Night-Cap Country.*
	1875.	*Aristophanes' Apology.*
	1875.	*The Inn Album.*
July	1876.	*Pacchiarotto and How He Worked in Distemper.*
	1877.	*The Agamemnon of Æschylus* translated.
	1878.	*La Saisiaz; The Two Poets of Croisic.*
Aug.	1878.	Browning first revisited Italy.
	1879.	*Dramatic Idyls.*
	1880.	*Dramatic Idyls.* Second Series.
	1881.	The London Browning Society established.
	1883.	*Jocoseria.*
	1884.	*Ferishtah's Fancies.*
	1887.	Browning moved to De Vere Gardens.
	1887.	*Poetic and Dramatic Works of Robert Browning.* Riverside edition: Houghton, Mifflin and Company.
	1888-9.	*The Poetical Works of Robert Browning.* In sixteen volumes. Smith, Elder and Company. [All the works collected by the author except *Asolando.*]
Dec. 12,	1889.	*Asolando.*
Dec. 12,	1889.	Robert Browning died in the Palazzo Rezzonica, his son's home in Venice.
Dec. 31,	1889.	Buried in Westminster Abbey.

SELECTIONS

FROM THE

POEMS AND PLAYS

OF

Robert Browning

SONGS FROM PARACELSUS

I

"HEAP CASSIA, SANDAL-BUDS, AND STRIPES"

Heap cassia, sandal-buds, and stripes
  Of labdanum, and aloe-balls,
Smeared with dull nard an Indian wipes
  From out her hair; such balsam falls
  Down sea-side mountain pedestals,
From tree-tops where tired winds are fain,
Spent with the vast and howling main,
To treasure half their island-gain.

And strew faint sweetness from some old
  Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud
Which breaks to dust when once unrolled;
  Or shredded perfume, like a cloud
  From closet long to quiet vowed,
With mothed and dropping arras hung,
Moldering her lute and books among,
As when a queen, long dead, was young.

II

"OVER THE SEA OUR GALLEYS WENT"

  Over the sea our galleys went
With cleaving prows in order brave
To a speeding wind and a bounding wave—
  A gallant armament;

Each bark built out of a forest-tree
Left leafy and rough as first it grew,
And nailed all over the gaping sides,
Within and without, with black bull-hides,
Seethed in fat and suppled in flame,
To bear the playful billows' game.
So each good ship was rude to see,
Rude and bare to the outward view,
But each upbore a stately tent
Where cedar pales in scented row
Kept out the flakes of the dancing brine,
And an awning drooped the mast below,
In fold on fold of the purple fine,
That neither noontide nor starshine
Nor moonlight cold which maketh mad,
Might pierce the regal tenement.
When the sun dawned, oh, gay and glad
We set the sail and plied the oar;
But when the night-wind blew like breath,
For joy of one day's voyage more,
We sang together on the wide sea,
Like men at peace on a peaceful shore;
Each sail was loosed to the wind so free,
Each helm made sure by the twilight star,
And in a sleep as calm as death,
We, the voyagers from afar,
Lay stretched along, each weary crew
In a circle round its wondrous tent
Whence gleamed soft light and curled rich scent,
And with light and perfume, music too.
So the stars wheeled round, and the darkness passed,

And at morn we started beside the mast,
And still each ship was sailing fast.

Now one morn land appeared—a speck
Dim trembling betwixt sea and sky.
"Avoid it," cried our pilot, "check
The shout, restrain the eager eye!"
But the heaving sea was black behind
For many a night and many a day,
And land, though but a rock, drew nigh;
So we broke the cedar pales away,
Let the purple awning flap in the wind,
And a statue bright was on every deck!
We shouted, every man of us,
And steered right into the harbor thus,
With pomp and pæan glorious.

A hundred shapes of lucid stone!
All day we built its shrine for each,
A shrine of rock for everyone,
Nor paused till in the westering sun
We sat together on the beach
To sing because our task was done.
When lo! what shouts and merry songs!
What laughter all the distance stirs!
A loaded raft with happy throngs
Of gentle islanders!
"Our isles are just at hand," they cried,
"Like cloudlets faint in even sleeping;
Our temple-gates are opened wide,
Our olive-groves thick shade are keeping

For these majestic forms"—they cried.
Oh, then we awoke with sudden start
From our deep dream, and knew, too late,
How bare the rock, how desolate,
Which had received our precious freight.
Yet we called out—"Depart!
Our gifts once given must here abide.
Our work is done; we have no heart
To mar our work"—we cried.

III

"THUS THE MAYNE GLIDETH"

Thus the Mayne glideth
Where my Love abideth.
Sleep's no softer; it proceeds
On through lawns, on through meads,
On and on, whate'er befall,
Meandering and musical,
Though the niggard pasturage
Bears not on its shaven ledge
Aught but weeds and waving grasses
To view the river as it passes,
Save here and there a scanty patch
Of primroses too faint to catch
A weary bee.
And scarce it pushes
Its gentle way through strangling rushes
Where the glossy kingfisher
Flutters when noon-heats are near,

Glad the shelving banks to shun,
Red and steaming in the sun,
Where the shrew-mouse with pale throat
Burrows, and the speckled stoat;
Where the quick sandpipers flit
In and out the marl and grit
That seems to breed them, brown as they.
Naught disturbs its quiet way,
Save some lazy stork that springs,
Trailing it with legs and wings,
Whom the shy fox from the hill
Rouses, creep he ne'er so still.

CAVALIER TUNES

I

MARCHING ALONG

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing;
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song:

God for King Charles! Pym and such carles
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles!

Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup
Till you're—
CHORUS.—*Marching along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell
Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well!
England, good cheer! Rupert is near!
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,
CHORUS.—*Marching along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls
To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!
Hold by the right, you double your might;
So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight.
CHORUS.—*March we along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!

II

GIVE A ROUSE

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse; here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since?
Who raised me the house that sank once?

Who helped me to gold I spent since?
Who found me in wine you drank once?
CHORUS.—
King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse; here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool's side that begot him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh else,
While Noll's damned troopers shot him?
CHORUS.—
King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse; here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

III

BOOT AND SADDLE

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,
CHORUS.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay—
CHORUS.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array;
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,
CHORUS.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
I've better counselors; what counsel they?
CHORUS.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

THE LOST LEADER

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed;
How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us—they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
—He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

We shall march prospering—not through his presence;
Songs may inspirit us—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done—while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire.
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins; let him never come back to us!
There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX"

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gatebolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,

Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aershot up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray;

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick, heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely—the fault's not in her;
We'll remember at Aix"— for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is—friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

GARDEN FANCIES

THE FLOWER'S NAME

Here's the garden she walked across,
Arm in my arm, such a short while since;
Hark, now I push its wicket, the moss
Hinders the hinges and makes them wince!
She must have reached this shrub ere she turned,
As back with that murmur the wicket swung;
For she laid the poor snail, my chance foot spurned,
To feed and forget it the leaves among.

Down this side of the gravel-walk
She went while her robe's edge brushed the box;
And here she paused in her gracious talk
To point me a moth on the milk-white phlox.
Roses, ranged in valiant row,
I will never think that she passed you by!
She loves you, noble roses, I know;
But yonder, see, where the rock-plants lie!

This flower she stopped at, finger on lip,
Stooped over, in doubt, as settling its claim;
Till she gave me, with pride to make no slip,
Its soft meandering Spanish name.
What a name! Was it love or praise?
Speech half-asleep or song half-awake?
I must learn Spanish, one of these days,
Only for that slow sweet name's sake.

Roses, if I live and do well,
I may bring her, one of these days,
To fix you fast with as fine a spell,
Fit you each with his Spanish phrase;
But do not detain me now; for she lingers
There, like sunshine over the ground,
And ever I see her soft white fingers
Searching after the bud she found.

Flower, you Spaniard, look that you grow not;
Stay as you are and be loved forever!
Bud, if I kiss you 'tis that you blow not;
Mind, the shut pink month opens never!
For while it pouts, her fingers wrestle,
Twinkling the audacious leaves between,
Till round they turn and down they nestle—
Is not the dear mark still to be seen?

Where I find her not, beauties vanish;
Whither I follow her, beauties flee;
Is there no method to tell her in Spanish
June's twice June since she breathed it with me?
Come, bud, show me the least of her traces,
Treasure my lady's lightest footfall!
—Ah, you may flout and turn up your faces—
Roses, you are not so fair after all!

MEETING AT NIGHT

The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

PARTING AT MORNING

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim;
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

EVELYN HOPE

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
Beginning to die too, in the glass;

Little has yet been changed, I think;
The shutters are shut, no light may pass
Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name;
It was not her time to love; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir,
Till God's hand beckoned unawares—
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?
What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire, and dew—
And just because I was thrice as old
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was naught to each, must I be told?
We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

No, indeed! for God above
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love;
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few;
Much is to learn, much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come—at last it will,
When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)
In the lower earth, in the years long still,
That body and soul so pure and gay?
Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geranium's red—
And what you would do with me, in fine,
In the new life come in the old one's stead.

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,
Gained me the gains of various men,
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope,
Either I missed or itself missed me;
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
What is the issue? let us see!

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!
My heart seemed full as it could hold;
There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
So, hush—I will give you this leaf to keep;
See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!
There, that is our secret; go to sleep!
You will wake, and remember, and understand.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure; certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to (else they run
Into one)
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds

Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all around, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colored eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there

In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts—and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
Gold, of course.
O heart! O blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON OF QUALITY)

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
—I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned wool.

But the city, oh, the city—the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

What of a villa? Though winter be over in March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights:
You've the brown plowed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive-trees.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foam-bows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted forefinger.

Some think fireflies pretty when they mix i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons—I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin;
No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in;
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there's the traveling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.
At the post office such a scene-picture—the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint Jerome, and Cicero;
"And, moreover" (the sonnet goes rhyming), "the skirts of Saint Paul has reached,

Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he preached."
Noon strikes—here sweeps the procession! our Lady borne smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still; it's the greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear—it's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate
It's a horror to think of. And so the villa for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers; but still—ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the yellow candles;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better prevention of scandals;
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life!

A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S

O Galuppi, Baldassare, this is very sad to find!
I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove me deaf and blind;
But although I take your meaning, 'tis with such a heavy mind!

Here you come with your old music, and here's all the good it brings.
What, they lived once thus at Venice where the merchants were the kings,
Where Saint Mark's is, where the Doges used to wed the sea with rings?

Aye, because the sea's the street there; and 'tis arched by . . . what you call
. . . Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where they kept the carnival;
I was never out of England—it's as if I saw it all.

Did young people take their pleasure when the sea was warm in May?
Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to midday,
When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow, do you say?

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so red—
On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-flower on its bed,

O'er the breast's superb abundance where a man might base his head?

Well, and it was graceful of them—they'd break talk off and afford
—She, to bite her mask's black velvet—he, to finger on his sword,
While you sat and played Toccatas, stately at the clavichord?

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminished, sigh on sigh,
Told them something? Those suspensions, those solutions—"Must we die?"
Those commiserating sevenths—"Life might last! we can but try!"

"Were you happy?"—"Yes."—"And are you still as happy?"—"Yes. And you?"
—"Then, more kisses!"—"Did *I* stop them, when a million seemed so few?"
Hark, the dominant's persistence till it must be answered to!

So an octave struck the answer. Oh, they praised you, I dare say!
"Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at grave and gay!
I can always leave off talking when I hear a master play!"

Then they left you for their pleasure; till in due time, one by one,
Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as well undone,
Death stepped tacitly and took them where they never see the sun.

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my stand nor swerve,
While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from nature's close reserve,
In you come with your cold music till I creep through every nerve.

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a house was burned:
"Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent what Venice earned.
The soul, doubtless, is immortal—where a soul can be discerned.

"Yours for instance; you know physics, something of geology,
Mathematics are your pastime; souls shall rise in their degree;
Butterflies may dread extinction—you'll not die, it cannot be!

"As for Venice and her people, merely born to bloom and drop,

Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly were the crop;
What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had to stop?

"Dust and ashes!" So you creak it, and I want the heart to scold.
Dear dead women, with such hair, too—what's become of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel chilly and grown old.

OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE

The morn when first it thunders in March,
The eel in the pond gives a leap, they say;
As I leaned and looked over the aloed arch
Of the villa-gate this warm March day,
No flash snapped, no dumb thunder rolled
In the valley beneath where, white and wide
And washed by the morning water-gold,
Florence lay out on the mountain-side.

River and bridge and street and square
Lay mine, as much at my beck and call,
Through the live translucent bath of air,
As the sights in a magic crystal ball.
And of all I saw and of all I praised,
The most to praise and the best to see
Was the startling bell-tower Giotto raised;
But why did it more than startle me?

Giotto, how, with that soul of yours,
Could you play me false who loved you so?
Some slights if a certain heart endures
Yet it feels, I would have your fellows know!
I' faith, I perceive not why I should care
To break a silence that suits them best,
But the thing grows somewhat hard to bear
When I find a Giotto join the rest.

On the arch where olives overhead
Print the blue sky with twig and leaf
(That sharp-curled leaf which they never shed)
'Twixt the aloes, I used to lean in chief,
And mark through the winter afternoons,
By a gift God grants me now and then,
In the mild decline of those suns like moons,
Who walked in Florence, besides her men.

They might chirp and chaffer, come and go
For pleasure or profit, her men alive—
My business was hardly with them, I trow,
But with empty cells of the human hive—
With the chapter-room, the cloister-porch,
The church's apsis, aisle, or nave,
Its crypt, one fingers along with a torch,
Its face set full for the sun to shave.

Wherever a fresco peels and drops,
Wherever an outline weakens and wanes
Till the latest life in the painting stops,
Stands One whom each fainter pulse-tick pains;

One, wishful each scrap should clutch the brick,
  Each tinge not wholly escape the plaster,
—A lion who dies of an ass's kick,
  The wronged great soul of an ancient Master.

For oh, this world and the wrong it does!
  They are safe in heaven with their backs to it,
The Michaels and Rafaels, you hum and buzz
  Round the works of, you of the little wit!
Do their eyes contract to the earth's old scope,
  Now that they see God face to face,
And have all attained to be poets, I hope?
  'Tis their holiday now, in any case.

Much they reck of your praise and you!
  But the wronged great souls—can they be quit
Of a world where their work is all to do,
  Where you style them, you of the little wit,
Old Master This and Early the Other,
  Not dreaming that Old and New are fellows:
A younger succeeds to an elder brother,
  Da Vincis derive in good time from Dellos.

And here where your praise might yield returns,
  And a handsome word or two give help,
Here, after your kind, the mastiff girns
  And the puppy pack of poodles yelp.
What, not a word for Stefano there,
  Of brow once prominent and starry,
Called Nature's Ape and the world's despair
  For his peerless painting? (See Vasari.)

There stands the Master. Study, my friends,
What a man's work comes to! So he plans it,
Performs it, perfects it, makes amends
For the toiling and moiling, and then, *sic transit!*
Happier the thrifty blind-folk labor,
With upturned eye while the hand is busy,
Not sidling a glance at the coin of their neighbor!
'Tis looking downward that makes one dizzy.

"If you knew their work you would deal your dole."
May I take upon me to instruct you?
When Greek Art ran and reached the goal,
Thus much had the world to boast *in fructu*—
The Truth of Man, as by God first spoken,
Which the actual generations garble,
Was re-uttered, and Soul (which Limbs betoken)
And Limbs (Soul informs) made new in marble.

So you saw yourself as you wished you were,
As you might have been, as you cannot be;
Earth here, rebuked by Olympus there:
And grew content in your poor degree
With your little power, by those statues' godhead,
And your little scope, by their eyes' full sway,
And your little grace, by their grace embodied,
And your little date, by their forms that stay.

You would fain be kinglier, say, than I am?
Even so, you will not sit like Theseus.
You would prove a model? The Son of Priam
Has yet the advantage in arms' and knees' use.

You're wroth—can you slay your snake like Apollo?
  You're grieved—still Niobe's the grander!
You live—there's the Racers' frieze to follow:
  You die—there's the dying Alexander.

So, testing your weakness by their strength,
  Your meager charms by their rounded beauty,
Measured by Art in your breadth and length,
  You learned—to submit is a mortal's duty.
—When I say "you" 'tis the common soul,
  The collective, I mean—the race of Man
That receives life in parts to live in a whole,
  And grow here according to God's clear plan.

Growth came when, looking your last on them all,
  You turned your eyes inwardly one fine day
And cried with a start—What if we so small
  Be greater and grander the while than they?
Are they perfect of lineament, perfect of stature?
  In both, of such lower types are we
Precisely because of our wider nature;
  For time, theirs—ours, for eternity.

Today's brief passion limits their range;
  It seethes with the morrow for us and more.
They are perfect—how else? they shall never change;
  We are faulty—why not? we have time in store.
The Artificer's hand is not arrested
  With us; we are rough-hewn, nowise polished;
They stand for our copy, and, once invested
  With all they can teach, we shall see them abolished.

'Tis a life-long toil till our lump be leaven—
The better! What's come to perfection perishes.
Things learned on earth we shall practice in heaven:
Works done least rapidly, Art most cherishes.
Thyself shalt afford the example, Giotto!
Thy one work, not to decrease or diminish,
Done at a stroke, was just (was it not?) "O!"
Thy great Campanile is still to finish.

Is it true that we are now, and shall be hereafter,
But what and where depend on life's minute?
Hails heavenly cheer or infernal laughter
Our first step out of the gulf or in it?
Shall Man, such step within his endeavor,
Man's face, have no more play and action
Than joy which is crystallized forever,
Or grief, an eternal petrifaction?

On which I conclude, that the early painters,
To cries of "Greek Art and what more wish you?"—
Replied, "To become now self-acquainters,
And paint man, man, whatever the issue!
Make new hopes shine through the flesh they fray,
New fears aggrandize the rags and tatters:
To bring the invisible full into play!
Let the visible go to the dogs—what matters?"

Give these, I exhort you, their guerdon and glory
For daring so much, before they well did it.
The first of the new, in our race's story,
Beats the last of the old; 'tis no idle quiddit.

The worthies began a revolution,
  Which if on earth you intend to acknowledge,
Why, honor them now! (ends my allocution)
  Nor confer your degree when the folk leave college.

There's a fancy some lean to and others hate—
  That, when this life is ended, begins
New work for the soul in another state,
  Where it strives and gets weary, loses and wins:
Where the strong and the weak, this world's congeries,
  Repeat in large what they practiced in small,
Through life after life in unlimited series;
  Only the scale's to be changed, that's all.

Yet I hardly know. When a soul has seen
  By the means of Evil that Good is best,
And, through earth and its noise, what is heaven's serene—
  When our faith in the same has stood the test—
Why, the child grown man, you burn the rod,
  The uses of labor are surely done;
There remaineth a rest for the people of God;
  And I have had troubles enough, for one.

But at any rate I have loved the season
  Of Art's spring-birth so dim and dewy;
My sculptor is Nicolo the Pisan,
  My painter—who but Cimabue?
Nor ever was a man of them all indeed,
  From these to Ghiberti and Ghirlandajo,
Could say that he missed my critic-meed.
  So, now to my special grievance—heigh-ho!

Their ghosts still stand, as I said before,
Watching each fresco flaked and rasped,
Blocked up, knocked out, or whitewashed o'er:
—No getting again what the church has grasped!
The works on the wall must take their chance;
"Works never conceded to England's thick clime!"
(I hope they prefer their inheritance
Of a bucketful of Italian quicklime.)

When they go at length, with such a shaking
Of heads o'er the old delusion, sadly
Each master his way through the black streets taking,
Where many a lost work breathes though badly—
Why don't they bethink them of who has merited?
Why not reveal while their pictures dree
Such doom, how a captive might be out-ferreted?
Why is it they never remember me?

Not that I expect the great Bigordi,
Nor Sandro to hear me, chivalric, bellicose;
Nor the wronged Lippino; and not a word I
Say of a scrap of Frà Angelico's;
But are you too fine, Taddeo Gaddi,
To grant me a taste of your intonaco,
Some Jerome that seeks the heaven with a sad eye?
Not a churlish saint, Lorenzo Monaco?

Could not the ghost with the close red cap,
My Pollajolo, the twice a craftsman,
Save me a sample, give me the hap
Of a muscular Christ that shows the draftsman?

No Virgin by him the somewhat petty,
  Of finical touch and tempera crumbly—
Could not Alesso Baldovinetti
  Contribute so much, I ask him humbly?

Margheritone of Arezzo,
  With the grave-clothes garb and swaddling barret
(Why purse up mouth and beak in a pet so,
  You bald old saturnine poll-clawed parrot?)
Not a poor glimmering Crucifixion,
  Where in the foreground kneels the donor?
If such remain, as is my conviction,
  The hoarding it does you but little honor.

They pass; for them the panels may thrill,
  The tempera grow alive and tinglish;
Their pictures are left to the mercies still
  Of dealers and stealers, Jews and the English,
Who, seeing mere money's worth in their prize,
  Will sell it to somebody calm as Zeno
At naked High Art, and in ecstasies
  Before some clay-cold vile Carlino!

No matter for these! But Giotto, you,
  Have you allowed, as the town-tongues babble it—
Oh, never! it shall not be counted true—
  That a certain precious little tablet
Which Buonarroti eyed like a lover—
  Was buried so long in oblivion's womb
And, left for another than I to discover,
  Turns up at last! and to whom?—to whom?

I, that have haunted the dim San Spirito,
(Or was it rather the Ognissanti?)
Patient on altar-step planting a weary toe!
Nay, I shall have it yet! *Detur amanti!*
My Koh-i-noor—or (if that's a platitude)
Jewel of Giamschid, the Persian Sofi's eye;
So, in anticipative gratitude,
What if I take up my hope and prophesy?

When the hour grows ripe, and a certain dotard
Is pitched, no parcel that needs invoicing,
To the worse side of the Mont Saint Gothard,
We shall begin by way of rejoicing;
None of that shooting the sky (blank cartridge),
Nor a civic guard, all plumes and lacquer,
Hunting Radetzky's soul like a partridge
Over Morello with squib and cracker.

This time we'll shoot better game and bag 'em hot—
No mere display at the stone of Dante,
But a kind of sober Witanagemot
(Ex: "Casa Guidi," *quod vidcas ante*)
Shall ponder, once Freedom restored to Florence,
How Art may return that departed with her.
Go, hated house, go each trace of the Loraine's,
And bring us the days of Orgagna hither!

How we shall prologuize, how we shall perorate,
Utter fit things upon art and history,
Feel truth at blood-heat and falsehood at zero rate,
Make of the want of the age no mystery;

Contrast the fructuous and sterile eras,
Show—monarchy ever its uncouth cub licks
Out of the bear's shape into Chimæra's,
While Pure Art's birth is still the republic's.

Then one shall propose in a speech (curt Tuscan,
Expurgate and sober, with scarcely an *"issimo,"*)
To end now our half-told tale of Cambuscan,
And turn the bell-tower's *alt* to *altissimo:*
And find as the beak of a young beccaccia
The Campanile, the Duomo's fit ally,
Shall soar up in gold full fifty braccia,
Completing Florence, as Florence, Italy.

Shall I be alive that morning the scaffold
Is broken away, and the long-pent fire,
Like the golden hope of the world, unbaffled
Springs from its sleep, and up goes the spire
While "God and the People" plain for its motto,
Thence the new tricolor flaps at the sky?
At least to foresee that glory of Giotto
And Florence together, the first am I!

"DE GUSTIBUS——"

Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
(If our loves remain)
In an English lane,
By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
Hark, those two in the hazel coppice—

A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
Making love, say—
The happier they!
Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,
And let them pass, as they will too soon,
With the bean-flowers' boon,
And the blackbird's tune,
And May, and June!

What I love best in all the world
Is a castle, precipice-encurled,
In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.
Or look for me, old fellow of mine,
(If I get my head from out the mouth
O' the grave, and loose my spirit's bands,
And come again to the land of lands)—
In a sea-side house to the farther South,
Where the baked cicala dies of drouth,
And one sharp tree—'tis a cypress—stands,
By the many hundred years red-rusted,
Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'ercrusted,
My sentinel to guard the sands
To the water's edge. For, what expands
Before the house, but the great opaque
Blue breadth of sea without a break?
While, in the house, forever crumbles
Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.
A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles
Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,
And says there's news today—the king

Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,
Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling:
—She hopes they have not caught the felons.
Italy, my Italy!
Queen Mary's saying serves for me—
(When fortune's malice
Lost her—Calais)—
Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it, "Italy."
Such lovers old are I and she:
So it always was, so shall ever be!

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,

Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the Northwest died away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay;
Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;
In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned Gibraltar grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me: how can I help England?"—say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

SAUL

I

Said Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou speak,
Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I wished it, and did kiss his cheek.
And he, "Since the King, O my friend, for thy countenance sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor until from his tent
Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth yet,
Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the water be wet.
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer nor of praise,
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life.

II

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's child with his dew
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living and blue
Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat
Were now raging to torture the desert!"

III

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose on my feet,
And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was unlooped;
I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I stooped;
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all withered and gone,
That extends to the second enclosure, I groped my way on
Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then once more I prayed,
And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was not afraid
But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!" And no voice replied.
At the first I saw naught but the blackness; but soon I descried
A something more black than the blackness—the vast, the upright
Main prop which sustains the pavilion; and slow into sight
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all.
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent-roof, showed Saul.

IV

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms stretched out wide
On the great cross-support in the center, that goes to each side;

He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as, caught in his pangs
And waiting his change, the king-serpent all heavily hangs,
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliverance come
With the springtime—so agonized Saul, drear and stark, blind and dumb.

V

Then I tuned my harp—took off the lilies we twine round its chords
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide—those sunbeams like swords!
And I first played the tune all our sheep know as, one after one,
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done.
They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the water within the stream's bed;
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us—so blue and so far!

VI

—Then the tune for which quails on the cornland will each leave his mate
To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate
Till for boldness they fight one another; and then, what has weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand house—

There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half mouse!
God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our fear,
To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

VII

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their wine-song, when hand
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship, and great hearts expand
And grow one in the sense of this world's life.—And then, the last song
When the dead man is praised on his journey—"Bear, bear him along,
With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets! Are balm seeds not here
To console us? The land has none left such as he on the bier.
Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!"—And then, the glad chaunt
Of the marriage—first go the young maidens, next, she whom we vaunt
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling.—And then, the great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and buttress an arch
Naught can break; who shall harm them, our friends? —Then, the chorus intoned
As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned.
But I stopped here; for here in the darkness Saul groaned.

VIII

And I paused, held my breath in such silence, and listened apart;
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered; and sparkles 'gan dart
From the jewels that woke in his turban, at once with a start,
All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous at heart.
So the head; but the body still moved not, still hung there erect.
And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it unchecked,
As I sang:

IX

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold dust divine,

And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draft of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy!
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose sword thou didst guard
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glorious reward?
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held up as men sung
The low song of the nearly-departed, and hear her faint tongue
Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime, and all was for best'?
Then they sung through their tears in strong triumph, not much, but the rest.
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the working whence grew
Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the spirit strained true;
And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood of wonder and hope,
Present promise and wealth of the future beyond the eye's scope—
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is thine;

And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on one head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage (like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and lets the gold go)
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame crowning them—all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—King Saul!"

X

And lo, with that leap of my spirit—heart, hand, harp, and voice,
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each bidding rejoice
Saul's fame in the light it was made for—as when, dare I say,
The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains through its array,
And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot—"Saul!" cried I, and stopped,
And waited the thing that should follow. Then Saul, who hung propped
By the tent's cross-support in the center, was struck by his name.
Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes right to the aim,
And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that held (he alone,
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a broad bust of stone

A year's snow bound about for a breastplate—leaves grasp of the sheet?
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his feet,
And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages untold—
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each furrow and scar
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest—all hail, there they are!
—Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold the nest
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the green on his crest
For their food in the ardors of summer. One long shudder thrilled
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was stilled
At the King's self left standing before me, released and aware.
What was gone, what remained? All to traverse, 'twixt hope and despair;
Death was past, life not come: so he waited. Awhile his right hand
Held the brow, held the eyes left too vacant forthwith to remand
To their place what new objects should enter: 'twas Saul as before.
I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes, nor was hurt any more

Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye watch from the shore,
At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean—a sun's slow decline
Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'erlap and entwine
Base with base to knit strength more intensely: so, arm folded arm
O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

XI

What spell or what charm,
(For, awhile there was trouble within me) what next should I urge
To sustain him where song had restored him?—Song filled to the verge
His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields
Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty; beyond, on what fields,
Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten the eye
And bring blood to the lip, and commend them the cup they put by?
He saith, "It is good"; still he drinks not; he lets me praise life,
Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

XII

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when round me the sheep

Fed in silence—above, the one eagle wheeled slow as in sleep;
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world that might lie
'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip 'twixt the hill and the sky;
And I laughed—"Since my days are ordained to be passed with my flocks,
Let me people at least, with my fancies, the plains and the rocks,
Dream the life I am never to mix with, and image the show
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I hardly shall know!
Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the courage that gains,
And the prudence that keeps what men strive for." And now these old trains
Of vague thought came again; I grew surer; so, once more the string
Of my harp made response to my spirit, as thus—

XIII

"Yea, my King,"
I began—"thou dost well in rejecting mere comforts that spring
From the mere mortal life held in common by man and by brute:
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our soul it bears fruit.
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree—how its stem trembled first

Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler; then safely outburst
The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest when these too, in turn
Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect; yet more was to learn,
E'en the good that comes in with the palm-fruit. Our dates shall we slight,
When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow? or care for the plight
Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced them? Not so! stem and branch
Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine shall stanch
Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such wine.
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!
By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt enjoy
More indeed, than at first when inconscious, the life of a boy.
Crush that life, and behold its wine running! Each deed thou hast done
Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until e'en as the sun
Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil him, though tempests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everywhere trace
The results of his past summer-prime—so, each ray of thy will,

Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill
Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor, till they too give forth
A like cheer to their sons, who in turn, fill the South and the North
With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse in the past!
But the license of age has its limit; thou diest at last;
As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her height,
So with man—so his power and his beauty forever take flight.
No! Again a long draft of my soul-wine! Look forth o'er the years!
Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual; begin with the seer's!
Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make his tomb—bid arise
A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to the skies,
Let it mark where the great First King slumbers; whose fame would ye know?
Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go
In great characters cut by the scribe—Such was Saul, so he did;
With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid—
For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised there! Which fault to amend,
In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon they shall spend

(See, in tablets 'tis level before them) their praise, and record
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story—the statesman's great word
Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The river's a-wave
With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other when prophet-winds rave:
So the pen gives unborn generations their due and their part
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank God that thou art!"

XIV

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who didst grant me that day,
And before it not seldom hast granted thy help to essay,
Carry on and complete an adventure—my shield and my sword
In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy word was my word—
Still be with me, who then at the summit of human endeavor
And scaling the highest, man's thought could, gazed hopeless as ever
On the new stretch of heaven above me—till, mighty to save,
Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance—God's throne from man's grave!
Let me tell out my tale to its evening—my voice to my heart

Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels last night
I took part,
As this morning I gather the fragments, alone with my
sheep,
And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish like sleep!
For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron
upheaves
The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and
Kidron retrieves
Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

XV

I say then—my song
While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and ever
more strong
Made a proffer of good to console him—he slowly re-
sumed
His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right hand
replumed
His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted the
swathes
Of his turban, and see—the huge sweat that his counte-
nance bathes,
He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now his loins
as of yore,
And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the clasp
set before.
He is Saul, ye remember in glory—ere error had bent
The broad brow from the daily communion; and still,
though much spent.
Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same, God
did choose

To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose.
So sank he along by the tent-prop till, stayed by the pile
Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he leaned there awhile,
And sat out my singing—one arm round the tent-prop, to raise
His bent head, and the other hung slack—till I touched on the praise
I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man patient there;
And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first I was 'ware
That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees
Which were thrust out on each side around me, like oak-roots which please
To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know
If the best I could do had brought solace; he spoke not, but slow
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow; through my hair
The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head, with kind power—
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.
Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized mine—
And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the sign?
I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,

I would add, to that life of the past, both the future and this;
I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence,
As this moment—had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!"

XVI

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more—no song more! outbroke—

XVII

"I have gone the whole round of creation; I saw and I spoke;
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork—returned him again
His creation's approval or censure; I spoke as I saw;
I report, as a man may of God's work—all's love, yet all's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dewdrop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank, to the Infinite Care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?

I but open my eyes—and perfection, no more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet.
Yet with all this abounding experience, this deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my own.
There's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh as I think),
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I worst
E'en the Giver in one gift.—Behold, I could love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love; I abstain for love's sake.
—What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors great and small,
Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth appall?
In the least things have faith, yet distrust in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it? Here, the parts shift?

Here, the creature surpass the Creator—the end what Began?
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt he alone shall not help him, who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvelous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears attest)
These good things being given, to go on, and give one more, the best?
Aye, to save and redeem and restore him, maintain at the height
This perfection—succeed with life's day-spring, death's minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul the mistake,
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now—and bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life—a new harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended—who knows?—or endure!
The man taught enough, by life's dream, of the rest to make sure;

By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by the struggles in this.

XVIII

"I believe it! 'Tis thou, God, that givest, 'tis I who receive:
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
All's one gift; thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt to my prayer
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air.
From thy will, stream the worlds, life and nature, thy dread Sabaoth:
I will?—the mere atoms despise me! Why am I not loath
To look that, even that in the face too? Why is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance? What stops my despair?
This;—'tis not what man Does which exalts him, but what man Would do!
See the King—I would help him but cannot, the wishes fall through.
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou—so wilt thou!

So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death!
As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

XIX

I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware;
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as struglingly there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished for news—
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with her crews;

And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge; but I fainted not,
For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported, suppressed
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest.
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth—
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender birth;
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the hills;
In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the sudden wind-thrills;
In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each with eye sidling still
Though averted with wonder and dread; in the birds stiff and chill
That rose heavily, as I approached them, made stupid with awe:
E'en the serpent that slid away silent—he felt the new law.
The same stared in the white humid faces upturned by the flowers;
The same worked in the heart of the cedar and moved the vine-bowers:
And the little brooks witnessing murmured, persistent and low,
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—"E'en so, it is so!"

MY STAR

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue;
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs furled:
They must solace themselves with the Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it.

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

I wonder do you feel today
As I have felt since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

For me, I touched a thought, I know,
Has tantalized me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
Mocking across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go.

Help me to hold it! First it left
The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,
Some old tomb's ruin; yonder weed
Took up the floating weft,

Where one small orange cup amassed
Five beetles—blind and green they grope
Among the honey-meal; and last,
Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast!

The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease.

Such life here, through such lengths of hours,
Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting nature have her way
While heaven looks from its towers!

How say you? Let us, O my dove,
Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above!
How is it under our control
To love or not to love?

I would that you were all to me,
You that are just so much, no more,

Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor free!
Where does the fault lie? What the core
O' the wound, since wound must be?

I would I could adopt your will,
See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
At your soul's springs—your part my part
In life, for good and ill.

No. I yearn upward, touch you close,
Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth—I pluck the rose
And love it more than tongue can speak—
Then the good minute goes.

Already how am I so far
Out of that minute? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fixed by no friendly star?

Just when I seemed about to learn!
Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern—
Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

IN THREE DAYS

So, I shall see her in three days
And just one night, but nights are short,
Then two long hours, and that is morn.
See how I come, unchanged, unworn!
Feel, where my life broke off from thine,
How fresh the splinters keep and fine—
Only a touch and we combine!

Too long, this time of year, the days!
But nights, at least the nights are short.
As night shows where her one moon is,
A hand's-breadth of pure light and bliss,
So life's night gives my lady birth
And my eyes hold her! What is worth
The rest of heaven, the rest of earth?

O loaded curls, release your store
Of warmth and scent, as once before
The tingling hair did, lights and darks
Outbreaking into fairy sparks,
When under curl and curl I pried
After the warmth and scent inside,
Through lights and darks how manifold—
The dark inspired, the light controlled!
As early Art embrowns the gold.

What great fear, should one say, "Three days
That change the world might change as well
Your fortune; and if joy delays,

Be happy that no worse befell!"
What small fear, if another says,
"Three days and one short night beside
May throw no shadow on your ways;
But years must teem with change untried,
With chance not easily defied,
With an end somewhere undescried."
No fear!—or if a fear be born
This minute, it dies out in scorn.
Fear? I shall see her in three days
And one night, now the nights are short,
Then just two hours, and that is morn.

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL

A PICTURE AT FANO

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
That child, when thou hast done with him, for me!
Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
Shall find performed thy special ministry,
And time come for departure, thou, suspending
Thy flight, mayst see another child for tending,
Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,
—And suddenly my head is covered o'er
With those wings, white above the child who prays

Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding
Me, out of all the world; for me, discarding
Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

I would not look up thither past thy head
Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
For I should have thy gracious face instead,
Thou bird of God! And wilt thou bend me low
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
And lift them up to pray, and gently tether
Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garment's spread?

If this was ever granted, I would rest
My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands,
Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
And all lay quiet, happy, and suppressed.

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired!
I think how I should view the earth and skies
And sea, when once again my brow was bared
After thy healing, with such different eyes.
O world, as God has made it! All is beauty:
And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.
What further may be sought for or declared?

Guercino drew this angel I saw teach
(Alfred, dear friend!)—that little child to pray,
Holding the little hands up, each to each

Pressed gently—with his own head turned away
Over the earth where so much lay before him
Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,
And he was left at Fano by the beach.

We were at Fano, and three times we went
To sit and see him in his chapel there,
And drink his beauty to our soul's content
—My angel with me too; and since I care
For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power
And glory comes this picture for a dower,
Fraught with a pathos so magnificent)—

And since he did not work thus earnestly
At all times, and has else endured some wrong—
I took one thought his picture struck from me,
And spread it out, translating it to song.
My love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end?
This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

MEMORABILIA

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you,
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems and new!

But you were living before that,
And also you are living after;

And the memory I started at—
My starting moves your laughter!

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
And a certain use in the world no doubt,
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about:

For there I picked up on the heather,
And there I put inside my breast
A molted feather, an eagle-feather!
Well, I forget the rest.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused, "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall"—

Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy;
You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace
We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes;
"You're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat"; such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool

Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

Morning, evening, noon, and night,
"Praise God!" sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,
Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he labored, long and well;
O'er his work the boy's curls fell.

But ever, at each period,
He stopped and sang, "Praise God!"

Then back again his curls he threw,
And cheerful turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk, "Well done;
I doubt not thou art heard, my son:

"As well as if thy voice today
Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

"This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome
Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, "Would God that I
Might praise him, that great way, and die!"

Night passed, day shone,
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures alway,
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, "Nor day nor night
Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,
Spread his wings and sank to earth;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,
Lived there, and played the craftsman well;

And morning, evening, noon, and night,
Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew;
The man put off the stripling's hue;

The man matured and fell away
Into the season of decay;

And ever o'er the trade he bent,
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will; to him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, "A praise is in mine ear;
There is no doubt in it, no fear:

"So sing old worlds, and so
New worlds that from my footstool go.

"Clearer loves sound other ways;
I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day; he flew to Rome,
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite;

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,
Till on his life the sickness weighed;

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer;

And rising from the sickness drear
He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the East with praise he turned,
And on his sight the angel burned.

"I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell
And set thee here; I did not well.

"Vainly I left my angel-sphere,
Vain was thy dream of many a year.

"Thy voice's praise seemed weak; it dropped—
Creation's chorus stopped!

"Go back and praise again
The early way, while I remain.

"With that weak voice of our disdain,
Take up creation's pausing strain.

"Back to the cell and poor employ;
Resume the craftsman and the boy!"

Theocrite grew old at home;
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

One vanished as the other died;
They sought God side by side.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN;

A CHILD'S STORY

I

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin was a pity.

II

Rats!
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking.

"'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV

An hour they sat in council;
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell,
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh, for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous

For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

V

"Come in!"—the Mayor cried, looking bigger—
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red,
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in;
There was no guessing his kith and kin;
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: "It's as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

VI

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please your honors," said he, "I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
  All creatures living beneath the sun,
  That creep or swim or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!

And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and toad and newt and viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper."
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same check;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats:
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One? fifty thousand!"—was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII

Into the street the Piper stepped,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,

And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
  Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
  Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,
  Wherein all plunged and perished!
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
  (As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary:
Which was, "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe:
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:

And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, 'O rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!'
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, 'Come, bore me!'
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles,
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

IX

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation, too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish

Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
I've promised to visit by dinner time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor;
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion."

XI

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I brook
Being worse treated than a Cook?

Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

XII

Once more he stepped into the street,
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling;
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,

Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,
—Could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say—
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,

Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings:
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

XIV

Alas, alas for Hamelin!
There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says that heaven's gate
Opes to the rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavor,
And Piper and dancers were gone forever,

They made a decree that lawyers never
  Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
  On the Twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six";
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it the Pied Piper's Street—
Where anyone playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labor.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
  To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
  They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church-window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away,
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people who ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbors lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

XV

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers!
And, whether they pipe us free fróm rats or fróm mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise!

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS

I

You're my friend:
I was the man the Duke spoke to;
I helped the Duchess to cast off his yoke, too;
So here's the tale from beginning to end,
My friend!

II

Ours is a great wild country:
If you climb to our castle's top,
I don't see where your eye can stop;
For when you've passed the cornfield country,
Where vineyards leave off, flocks are packed,
And sheep-range leads to cattle-tract,
And cattle-tract to open-chase,
And open-chase to the very base
Of the mountain where, at a funeral pace,
Round about, solemn and slow,

One by one, row after row,
Up and up the pine-trees go,
So, like black priests up, and so
Down the other side again
To another greater, wilder country,
That's one vast red drear burnt-up plain,
Branched through and through with many a vein
Whence iron's dug, and copper's dealt;
Look right, look left, look straight before—
Beneath they mine, above they smelt,
Copper-ore and iron-ore,
And forge and furnace mold and melt
And so on, more and ever more,
Till at the last, for a bounding belt,
Comes the salt sand hoar of the great seashore,
—And the whole is our Duke's country.

III

I was born the day this present Duke was—
(And O, says the song, ere I was old!)
In the castle where the other Duke was—
(When I was happy and young, not old!)
I in the kennel, he in the bower:
We are of like age to an hour.
My father was huntsman in that day;
Who has not heard my father say
That, when a boar was brought to bay,
Three times, four times out of five,
With his huntspear he'd contrive
To get the killing-place transfixed,

And pin him true, both eyes betwixt?
And that's why the old Duke would rather
He lost a salt-pit than my father,
And loved to have him ever in call;
That's why my father stood in the hall
When the old Duke brought his infant out
To show the people, and while they passed
The wondrous bantling round about,
Was first to start at the outside blast
As the Kaiser's courier blew his horn,
Just a month after the babe was born.
"And," quoth the Kaiser's courier, "since
The Duke has got an heir, our Prince
Needs the Duke's self at his side";
The Duke looked down and seemed to wince,
But he thought of wars o'er the world wide,
Castles a-fire, men on their march,
The toppling tower, the crashing arch;
And up he looked, and awhile he eyed
The row of crests and shields and banners
Of all achievements after all manners,
And "aye," said the Duke with a surly pride.
The more was his comfort when he died
At next year's end, in a velvet suit,
With a gilt glove on his hand, his foot
In a silken shoe for a leather boot,
Petticoated like a herald,
In a chamber next to an ante-room,
Where he breathed the breath of page and groom,
What he called stink, and they, perfume:
—They should have set him on red Berold

Mad with pride, like fire to manage!
They should have got his cheek fresh tannage
Such a day as today in the merry sunshine!
Had they stuck on his fist a rough-foot merlin!
(Hark, the wind's on the heath at its game!
Oh, for a noble falcon-lanner
To flap each broad wing like a banner,
And turn in the wind, and dance like flame!)
Had they broached a white-beer cask from Berlin
—Or if you incline to prescribe mere wine
Put to his lips, when they saw him pine,
A cup of our own Moldavia fine,
Cotnar for instance, green as May sorrel
And ropy with sweet—we shall not quarrel.

IV

So, at home, the sick, tall, yellow Duchess
Was left with the infant in her clutches,
She being the daughter of God knows who:
And now was the time to revisit her tribe.
Abroad and afar they went, the two,
And let our people rail and gibe
At the empty hall and extinguished fire,
As loud as we liked, but ever in vain,
Till after long years we had our desire,
And back came the Duke and his mother again.

V

And he came back the pertest little ape
That ever affronted human shape;

Full of his travel, struck at himself.
You'd say he despised our bluff old ways?
—Not he! For in Paris they told the elf
Our rough North land was the Land of Lays,
The one good thing left in evil days;
Since the Mid-Age was the Heroic Time,
And only in wild nooks like ours
Could you taste of it yet as in its prime,
And see true castles, with proper towers,
Young-hearted women, old-minded men,
And manners now as manners were then.
So, all that the old Dukes had been, without knowing it,
This Duke would fain know he was, without being it;
'Twas not for the joy's self, but the joy of his showing it,
Nor for the pride's self, but the pride of our seeing it,
He revived all usages thoroughly worn-out,
The souls of them fumed-forth, the hearts of them torn-out:
And chief in the chase his neck he periled
On a lathy horse, all legs and length,
With blood for bone, all speed, no strength;
—They should have set him on red Berold
With the red eye slow consuming in fire,
And the thin stiff ear like an abbey-spire!

VI

Well, such as he was, he must marry, we heard:
And out of a convent, at the word,
Came the lady in time of spring.
—Oh, old thoughts they cling, they cling!
That day, I know, with a dozen oaths

I clad myself in thick hunting-clothes
Fit for the chase of urochs or buffle
In winter-time when you need to muffle.
But the Duke had a mind we should cut a figure,
And so we saw the lady arrive:
My friend, I have seen a white crane bigger!
She was the smallest lady alive,
Made in a piece of nature's madness,
Too small, almost, for the life and gladness
That overfilled her, as some hive
Out of the bears' reach on the high trees
Is crowded with its safe, merry bees:
In truth, she was not hard to please!
Up she looked, down she looked, round at the mead,
Straight at the castle, that's best indeed
To look at from outside the walls;
As for us, styled the "serfs and thralls,"
She as much thanked me as if she had said it,
(With her eyes, do you understand?)
Because I patted her horse while I led it;
And Max, who rode on her other hand,
Said, no bird flew past but she inquired
What its true name was, nor ever seemed tired—
If that was an eagle she saw hover,
And the green and gray bird on the field was the plover.
When suddenly appeared the Duke:
And as down she sprung, the small foot pointed
On to my hand—as with a rebuke,
And as if his backbone were not jointed,
The Duke stepped rather aside than forward,
And welcomed her with his grandest smile;

And, mind you, his mother all the while
Chilled in the rear, like a wind to Nor'ward;
And up, like a weary yawn, with its pulleys
Went, in a shriek, the rusty portcullis;
And, like a glad sky the north-wind sullies,
The lady's face stopped its play,
As if her first hair had grown gray;
For such things must begin some one day.

VII

In a day or two she was well again;
As who should say, "You labor in vain!
This is all a jest against God, who meant
I should ever be, as I am, content
And glad in His sight; therefore, glad I will be."
So, smiling as at first, went she.

VIII

She was active, stirring, all fire—
Could not rest, could not tire—
To a stone she might have given life!
(I myself loved once, in my day)
—For a shepherd's, miner's, huntsman's wife,
(I had a wife, I know what I say)
Never in all the world such an one!
And here was plenty to be done,
And she that could do it, great or small,
She was to do nothing at all.
There was already this man in his post,

This in his station, and that in his office,
And the Duke's plan admitted a wife, at most,
To meet his eye, with the other trophies,
Now outside the hall, now in it,
To sit thus, stand thus, see and be seen,
At the proper place in the proper minute,
And die away the life between.
And it was amusing enough, each infraction
Of rule—(but for after-sadness that came)
To hear the consummate self-satisfaction
With which the young Duke and the old dame
Would let her advise, and criticize,
And, being a fool, instruct the wise,
And, child-like, parcel out praise or blame:
They bore it all in complacent guise,
As though an artificer, after contriving
A wheel-work image as if it were living,
Should find with delight it could motion to strike him!
So found the Duke, and his mother like him:
The lady hardly got a rebuff—
That had not been contemptuous enough,
With his cursed smirk, as he nodded applause,
And kept off the old mother-cat's claws.

IX

So, the little lady grew silent and thin,
Paling and ever paling,
As the way is with a hid chagrin;
And the Duke perceived that she was ailing,
And said in his heart, "'Tis done to spite me,

But I shall find in my power to right me!"
Don't swear, friend! The old one, many a year,
Is in hell, and the Duke's self . . . you shall hear.

X

Well, early in autumn, at first winter-warning,
When the stag had to break with his foot, of a morning,
A drinking-hole out of the fresh tender ice
That covered the pond till the sun, in a trice,
Loosening it, let out a ripple of gold,
And another and another, and faster and faster,
Till, dimpling to blindness, the wide water rolled;
Then it so chanced that the Duke our master
Asked himself what were the pleasures in season,
And found, since the calendar bade him be hearty,
He should do the Middle Age no treason
In resolving on a hunting-party.
Always provided, old books showed the way of it!
What meant old poets by their strictures?
And when old poets had said their say of it,
How taught old painters in their pictures?
We must revert to the proper channels,
Workings in tapestry, paintings on panels,
And gather up woodcraft's authentic traditions:
Here was food for our various ambitions,
As on each case, exactly stated—
To encourage your dog, now, the properest chirrup,
Or best prayer to Saint Hubert on mounting your stirrup—
We of the household took thought and debated.

Blessed was he whose back ached with the jerkin
His sire was wont to do forest-work in;
Blesseder he who nobly sunk "ohs"
And "ahs" while he tugged on his grandsire's trunk-hose;
What signified hats if they had no rims on,
Each slouching before and behind like the scallop,
And able to serve at sea for a shallop,
Loaded with lacquer and looped with crimson?
So that the deer now, to make a short rhyme on't,
What with our Venerers, Prickers, and Verderers,
Might hope for real hunters at length and not murderers,
And, oh, the Duke's tailor, he had a hot time on't!

XI

Now you must know that when the first dizziness
Of flap-hats and buff-coats and jack-boots subsided,
The Duke put this question, "The Duke's part provided,
Had not the Duchess some share in the business?"
For out of the mouth of two or three witnesses
Did he establish all fit-or-unfitnesses:
And, after much laying of heads together,
Somebody's cap got a notable feather
By the announcement with proper unction
That he had discovered the lady's function;
Since ancient authors gave this tenet,
"When horns wind a mort and the deer is at siege,
Let the dame of the castle prick forth on her jennet,
And, with water to wash the hands of her liege
In a clean ewer with a fair toweling,
Let her preside at the disemboweling."
Now, my friend, if you had so little religion

As to catch a hawk, some falcon-lanner,
And thrust her broad wings like a banner
Into a coop for a vulgar pigeon;
And if day by day and week by week
You cut her claws, and sealed her eyes,
And clipped her wings, and tied her beak,
Would it cause you any great surprise
If, when you decided to give her an airing,
You found she needed a little preparing?
—I say, should you be such a curmudgeon,
If she clung to the perch, as to take it in dudgeon?
Yet when the Duke to his lady signified,
Just a day before, as he judged most dignified,
In what a pleasure she was to participate—
And, instead of leaping wide in flashes,
Her eyes just lifted their long lashes,
As if pressed by fatigue even he could not dissipate,
And duly acknowledged the Duke's forethought,
But spoke of her health, if her health were worth aught,
Of the weight by day and the watch by night,
And much wrong now that used to be right,
So, thanking him, declined the hunting—
Was conduct ever more affronting?
With all the ceremony settled—
With the towel ready, and the sewer
Polishing up his oldest ewer,
And the jennet pitched upon, a piebald,
Black-barred, cream-coated, and pink eye-balled—
No wonder if the Duke was nettled!
And when she persisted nevertheless—
Well, I suppose here's the time to confess

That there ran half round our lady's chamber
A balcony none of the hardest to clamber;
And that Jacynth, the tire-woman, ready in waiting,
Stayed in call outside, what need of relating?
And since Jacynth was like a June rose, why, a fervent
Adorer of Jacynth of course was your servant;
And if she had the habit to peep through the casement,
How could I keep at any vast distance?
And so, as I say, on the lady's persistence,
The Duke, dumb-stricken with amazement,
Stood for a while in a sultry smother,
And then, with a smile that partook of the awful,
Turned her over to his yellow mother
To learn what was held decorous and lawful;
And the mother smelt blood with a cat-like instinct,
As her cheek quick whitened through all its quince-tinct.
Oh, but the lady heard the whole truth at once!
What meant she?—Who was she?—Her duty and station,
The wisdom of age and the folly of youth, at once,
Its decent regard and its fitting relation—
In brief, my friend, set all the devils in hell free
And turn them out to carouse in a belfry
And treat the priests to a fifty-part canon,
And then you may guess how that tongue of hers ran on!
Well, somehow or other it ended at last
And, licking her whiskers, out she passed;
And after her—making (he hoped) a face
Like Emperor Nero or Sultan Saladin,
Stalked the Duke's self with the austere grace
Of ancient hero or modern paladin,

From door to staircase—oh, such a solemn
Unbending of the vertebral column!

XII

However, at sunrise our company mustered;
And here was the huntsman bidding unkennel,
And there 'neath his bonnet the pricker blustered,
With feather dank as a bough of wet fennel;
For the courtyard walls were filled with fog
You might have cut as an ax chops a log—
Like so much wool for color and bulkiness;
And out rode the Duke in a perfect sulkiness,
Since, before breakfast, a man feels but queasily,
And a sinking at the lower abdomen
Begins the day with indifferent omen.
And lo, as he looked around uneasily,
The sun plowed the fog up and drove it asunder
This way and that from the valley under;
And, looking through the court-yard arch,
Down in the valley, what should meet him
But a troop of gypsies on their march?
No doubt with the annual gifts to greet him.

XIII

Now, in your land, gypsies reach you only
After reaching all lands beside;
North they go, South they go, trooping or lonely,
And still, as they travel far and wide,
Catch they and keep now a trace here, a trace there,
That puts you in mind of a place here, a place there.

But with us, I believe they rise out of the ground,
And nowhere else, I take it, are found
With the earth-tint yet so freshly embrowned:
Born, no doubt, like insects which breed on
The very fruit they are meant to feed on.
For the earth—not a use to which they don't turn it,
The ore that grows in the mountain's womb,
Or the sand in the pits like a honeycomb,
They sift and soften it, bake it and burn it—
Whether they weld you, for instance, a snaffle
With side-bars never a brute can baffle;
Or a lock that's a puzzle of wards within wards;
Or, if your colt's forefoot inclines to curve inwards,
Horseshoes they hammer which turn on a swivel
And won't allow the hoof to shrivel.
Then they cast bells like the shell of the winkle
That keep a stout heart in the ram with their tinkle;
But the sand—they pinch and pound it like otters;
Commend me the gypsy glass-makers and potters!
Glasses they'll blow you, crystal-clear,
Where just a faint cloud of rose shall appear,
As if in pure water you dropped and let die
A bruised black-blooded mulberry;
And that other sort, their crowning pride,
With long white threads distinct inside,
Like the lake-flower's fibrous roots which dangle
Loose such a length and never tangle,
Where the bold sword-lily cuts the clear waters,
And the cup-lily couches with all the white daughters:
Such are the works they put their hand to,
The uses they turn and twist iron and sand to.

And these made the troop, which our Duke saw sally
Toward his castle from out of the valley,
Men and women, like new-hatched spiders,
Come out with the morning to greet our riders.
And up they wound till they reached the ditch,
Whereat all stopped save one, a witch
That I knew, as she hobbled from the group,
By her gait directly and her stoop,
I, whom Jacynth was used to importune
To let that same witch tell us our fortune.
The oldest gypsy then above ground;
And, sure as the autumn season came round,
She paid us a visit for profit or pastime,
And every time, as she swore, for the last time.
And presently she was seen to sidle
Up to the Duke till she touched his bridle,
So that the horse of a sudden reared up
As under its nose the old witch peered up
With her worn-out eyes, or rather eye-holes
Of no use now but to gather brine,
And began a kind of level whine
Such as they used to sing to their viols
When their ditties they go grinding
Up and down with nobody minding;
And then, as of old, at the end of the humming
Her usual presents were forthcoming
—A dog-whistle blowing the fiercest of trebles
(Just a seashore stone holding a dozen fine pebbles),
Or a porcelain mouthpiece to screw on a pipe-end—
And so she awaited her annual stipend.
But this time the Duke would scarcely vouchsafe

A word in reply; and in vain she felt
With twitching fingers at her belt
For the purse of sleek pine-marten pelt,
Ready to put what he gave in her pouch safe—
Till, either to quicken his apprehension,
Or possibly with an after-intention,
She was come, she said, to pay her duty
To the new Duchess, the youthful beauty.
No sooner had she named his lady
Than a shine lit up the face so shady,
And its smirk returned with a novel meaning—
For it struck him, the babe just wanted weaning;
If one gave her a taste of what life was and sorrow,
She, foolish today, would be wiser tomorrow;
And who so fit a teacher of trouble
As this sordid crone bent well-nigh double?
So, glancing at her wolf-skin vesture,
(If such it was, for they grow so hirsute
That their own fleece serves for natural fur-suit)
He was contrasting, 'twas plain from his gesture,
The life of the lady so flower-like and delicate
With the loathsome squalor of this helicat.
I, in brief, was the man the Duke beckoned
From out of the throng, and while I drew near
He told the crone—as I since have reckoned
By the way he bent and spoke into her ear
With circumspection and mystery—
The main of the lady's history,
Her frowardness and ingratitude:
And for all the crone's submissive attitude
I could see round her mouth the loose plaits tightening,

And her brow with assenting intelligence brightening,
As though she engaged with hearty goodwill
Whatever he now might enjoin to fulfill,
And promised the lady a thorough frightening.
And so, just giving her a glimpse
Of a purse, with the air of a man who imps
The wing of the hawk that shall fetch the hernshaw,
He bade me take the gypsy mother
And set her telling some story or other
Of hill or dale, oak-wood or fernshaw,
To wile away a weary hour
For the lady left alone in her bower,
Whose mind and body craved exertion
And yet shrank from all better diversion.

XIV

Then clapping heel to his horse, the mere curveter,
Out rode the Duke, and after his hollo
Horses and hounds swept, huntsman and servitor,
And back I turned and bade the crone follow.
And what makes me confident what's to be told you
Had all along been of this crone's devising,
Is, that, on looking round sharply, behold you,
There was a novelty quick as surprising:
For first, she had shot up a full head in stature,
And her step kept pace with mine nor faltered,
As if age had foregone its usurpature,
And the ignoble mien was wholly altered,
And the face looked quite of another nature,
And the change reached too, whatever the change meant,

Her shaggy wolf-skin cloak's arrangement:
For where its tatters hung loose like sedges,
Gold coins were glittering on the edges,
Like the band-roll strung with tomans
Which proves the veil a Persian woman's:
And under her brow, like a snail's horns newly
Come out as after the rain he paces,
Two unmistakable eye-points duly
Live and aware looked out of their places.
So, we went and found Jacynth at the entry
Of the lady's chamber standing sentry;
I told the command and produced my companion,
And Jacynth rejoiced to admit anyone,
For since last night, by the same token,
Not a single word had the lady spoken:
They went in both to the presence together,
While I in the balcony watched the weather.

XV

And now, what took place at the very first of all,
I cannot tell, as I never could learn it:
Jacynth constantly wished a curse to fall
On that little head of hers and burn it,
If she knew how she came to drop so soundly
Asleep of a sudden and there continue
The whole time sleeping as profoundly
As one of the boars my father would pin you
'Twixt the eyes where life holds garrison,
—Jacynth forgive me the comparison!
But where I begin my own narration
Is a little after I took my station

To breathe the fresh air from the balcony,
And, having in those days a falcon eye,
To follow the hunt through the open country,
From where the bushes thinlier crested
The hillocks, to a plain where's not one tree.
When, in a moment, my ear was arrested
By—was it singing, or was it saying,
Or a strange musical instrument playing
In the chamber?—and to be certain
I pushed the lattice, pulled the curtain,
And there lay Jacynth asleep,
Yet as if a watch she tried to keep,
In a rosy sleep along the floor
With her head against the door;
While in the midst, on the seat of state,
Was a queen—the gypsy woman late,
With head and face downbent
On the lady's head and face intent:
For, coiled at her feet like a child at ease,
The lady sat between her knees,
And o'er them the lady's clasped hands met,
And on those hands her chin was set,
And her upturned face met the face of the crone
Wherein the eyes had grown and grown
As if she could double and quadruple
At pleasure the play of either pupil
—Very like, by her hands' slow fanning,
As up and down like a gor-crow's flappers
They moved to measure, or bell-clappers.
I said, "Is it blessing, is it banning,
Do they applaud you or burlesque you—

Those hands and fingers with no flesh on?"
But, just as I thought to spring in to the rescue,
At once I was stopped by the lady's expression:
For it was life her eyes were drinking
From the crone's wide pair above unwinking,
—Life's pure fire received without shrinking,
Into the heart and breast whose heaving
Told you no single drop they were leaving
—Life, that filling her, passed redundant
Into her very hair, back swerving
Over each shoulder, loose and abundant,
As her head thrown back showed the white throat curving;
And the very tresses shared in the pleasure,
Moving to the mystic measure,
Bounding as the bosom bounded.
I stopped short, more and more confounded,
As still her cheeks burned and eyes glistened,
As she listened and she listened:
When all at once a hand detained me,
The selfsame contagion gained me,
And I kept time to the wondrous chime,
Making out words and prose and rhyme,
Till it seemed that the music furled
Its wings like a task fulfilled, and dropped
From under the words it first had propped,
And left them midway in the world:
Word took word as hand takes hand,
I could hear at last, and understand,
And when I held the unbroken thread,
The gypsy said:

"And so at last we find my tribe.
And so I set thee in the midst,
And to one and all of them describe
What thou saidst and what thou didst,
Our long and terrible journey through,
And all thou art ready to say and do
In the trials that remain:
I trace them the vein and the other vein
That meet on thy brow and part again,
Making our rapid mystic mark;
And I bid my people prove and probe
Each eye's profound and glorious globe
Till they detect the kindred spark
In those depths so dear and dark,
Like the spots that snap and burst and flee,
Circling over the midnight sea.
And on that round young cheek of thine
I make them recognize the tinge,
As when of the costly scarlet wine
They drip so much as will impinge
And spread in a thinnest scale afloat
One thick gold drop from the olive's coat
Over a silver plate whose sheen
Still through the mixture shall be seen.
For so I prove thee, to one and all,
Fit, when my people ope their breast,
To see the sign, and hear the call,
And take the vow, and stand the test
Which adds one more child to the rest—
When the breast is bare and the arms are wide,
And the world is left outside.

For there is probation to decree,
And many and long must the trials be
Thou shalt victoriously endure,
If that brow is true and those eyes are sure;
Like a jewel-finder's fierce assay
  Of the prize he dug from its mountain-tomb—
Let once the vindicating ray
  Leap out amid the anxious gloom,
And steel and fire have done their part
And the prize falls on its finder's heart;
So, trial after trial past,
Wilt thou fall at the very last
Breathless, half in trance
With the thrill of the great deliverance,
  Into our arms forevermore;
And thou shalt know, those arms once curled
  About thee, what we knew before,
How love is the only good in the world.
Henceforth be loved as heart can love,
Or brain devise, or hand approve!
Stand up, look below,
It is our life at thy feet we throw
To step with into light and joy;
Not a power of life but we employ
To satisfy thy nature's want;
Art thou the tree that props the plant,
Or the climbing plant that seeks the tree—
Canst thou help us, must we help thee?
If any two creatures grew into one,
They would do more than the world has done:
Though each apart were never so weak,

Ye vainly through the world should seek
For the knowledge and the might
Which in such union grew their right:
So, to approach at least that end,
And blend—as much as may be, blend
Thee with us or us with thee—
As climbing plant or propping tree,
Shall someone deck thee, over and down,
Up and about, with blossoms and leaves?
Fix his heart's fruit for thy garland-crown,
Cling with his soul as the gourd-vine cleaves,
Die on thy boughs and disappear
While not a leaf of thine is sere?
Or is the other fate in store,
And art thou fitted to adore,
To give thy wondrous self away,
And take a stronger nature's sway?
I foresee and could foretell
Thy future portion, sure and well:
But those passionate eyes speak true, speak true,
Let them say what thou shalt do!
Only be sure thy daily life,
In its peace or in its strife,
Never shall be unobserved;
We pursue thy whole career,
And hope for it, or doubt, or fear—
Lo, hast thou kept thy path or swerved,
We are beside thee in all thy ways,
With our blame, with our praise,
Our shame to feel, our pride to show,
Glad, angry—but indifferent, no!

Whether it be thy lot to go,
For the good of us all, where the haters meet
In the crowded city's horrible street;
Or thou step alone through the morass
Where never sound yet was
Save the dry quick clap of the stork's bill,
For the air is still, and the water still,
When the blue breast of the dipping coot
Dives under, and all is mute.
So, at the last shall come old age,
Decrepit as befits that stage;
How else wouldst thou retire apart
With the hoarded memories of thy heart,
And gather all to the very least
Of the fragments of life's earlier feast,
Let fall through eagerness to find
The crowning dainties yet behind?
Ponder on the entire past
Laid together thus at last,
When the twilight helps to fuse
The first fresh with the faded hues,
And the outline of the whole,
As round eve's shades their framework roll,
Grandly fronts for once thy soul.
And then as, 'mid the dark, a gleam
  Of yet another morning breaks,
And like the hand which ends a dream,
Death, with the might of his sunbeam,
  Touches the flesh and the soul awakes,
Then"——
  Aye, then indeed something would happen!

But what? For here her voice changed like a bird's;
There grew more of the music and less of the words;
Had Jacynth only been by me to clap pen
To paper and put you down every syllable
With those clever clerkly fingers,
All I've forgotten as well as what lingers
In this old brain of mine that's but ill able
To give you even this poor version
Of the speech I spoil, as it were, with stammering
—More fault of those who had the hammering
Of prosody into me and syntax,
And did it, not with hobnails but tin-tacks!
But to return from this excursion—
Just, do you mark, when the song was sweetest,
The peace most deep and the charm completest,
There came, shall I say, a snap—
And the charm vanished!
And my sense returned, so strangely banished,
And, starting as from a nap,
I knew the crone was bewitching my lady,
With Jacynth asleep; and but one spring made I
Down from the casement, round to the portal,
Another minute and I had entered—
When the door opened, and more than mortal
Stood, with a face where to my mind centered
All beauties I ever saw or shall see,
The Duchess: I stopped as if struck by palsy.
She was so different, happy and beautiful,
I felt at once that all was best,
And that I had nothing to do, for the rest,
But wait her commands, obey and be dutiful.

Not that, in fact, there was any commanding;
I saw the glory of her eye,
And the brow's height and the breast's expanding,
And I was hers to live or to die.
As for finding what she wanted,
You know God Almighty granted
Such little signs should serve wild creatures
To tell one another all their desires,
So that each knows what his friend requires,
And does its bidding without teachers.
I preceded her; the crone
Followed silent and alone;
I spoke to her, but she merely jabbered
In the old style; both her eyes had slunk
Back to their pits; her stature shrunk;
In short, the soul in its body sunk
Like a blade sent home to its scabbard.
We descended, I preceding;
Crossed the court with nobody heeding;
All the world was at the chase,
The courtyard like a desert-place,
The stable emptied of its small fry;
I saddled myself the very palfrey
I remember patting while it carried her,
The day she arrived and the Duke married her.
And, do you know, though it's easy deceiving
Oneself in such matters, I can't help believing
The lady had not forgotten it either,
And knew the poor devil so much beneath her
Would have been only too glad for her service
To dance on hot plowshares like a Turk dervise,

But, unable to pay proper duty where owing it,
Was reduced to that pitiful method of showing it:
For though the moment I began setting
His saddle on my own nag of Berold's begetting,
(Not that I meant to be obtrusive)
She stopped me, while his rug was shifting,
By a single rapid finger's lifting,
And, with a gesture kind but conclusive,
And a little shake of the head, refused me—
I say, although she never used me,
Yet when she was mounted, the gypsy behind her,
And I ventured to remind her,
I suppose with a voice of less steadiness
Than usual, for my feeling exceeded me,
—Something to the effect that I was in readiness
Whenever God should please she needed me—
Then, do you know, her face looked down on me
With a look that placed a crown on me,
And she felt in her bosom—mark, her bosom—
And, as a flower-tree drops its blossom,
Dropped me . . . ah, had it been a purse
Of silver, my friend, or gold that's worse,
Why, you see, as soon as I found myself
So understood—that a true heart so may gain
Such a reward—I should have gone home again,
Kissed Jacynth, and soberly drowned myself!
It was a little plait of hair
Such as friends in a convent make
To wear, each for the other's sake—
This, see, which at my breast I wear,
Ever did (rather to Jacynth's grudgment),
And ever shall, till the Day of Judgment.

And then—and then—to cut short—this is idle,
These are feelings it is not good to foster—
I pushed the gate wide, she shook the bridle,
And the palfrey bounded—and so we lost her.

XVI

When the liquor's out why clink the cannikin?
I did think to describe you the panic in
The redoubtable breast of our master the mannikin,
And what was the pitch of his mother's yellowness,
How she turned as a shark to snap the spare-rib
Clean off, sailors says, from a pearl-diving Carib,
When she heard, what she called the flight of the feloness
—But it seems such child's play,
What they said and did with the lady away!
And to dance on, when we've lost the music,
Always made me—and no doubt makes you—sick.
Nay, to my mind, the world's face looked so stern
As that sweet form disappeared through the postern,
She that kept it in constant good humor,
It ought to have stopped; there seemed nothing to do more.
But the world thought otherwise and went on,
And my head's one that its spite was spent on;
Thirty years are fled since that morning,
And with them all my head's adorning.
Nor did the old Duchess die outright,
As you expect, of suppressed spite,
The natural end of every adder
Not suffered to empty its poison-bladder;

But she and her son agreed, I take it,
That no one should touch on the story to wake it,
For the wound in the Duke's pride rankled fiery,
So, they made no search and small inquiry—
And when fresh gypsies have paid us a visit, I've
Noticed the couple were never inquisitive,
But told them they're folks the Duke don't want here,
And bade them make haste and cross the frontier.
Brief, the Duchess was gone and the Duke was glad of it,
And the old one was in the young one's stead,
And took, in her place, the household's head,
And a blessed time the household had of it!
And were I not, as a man may say, cautious
How I trench, more than needs, on the nauseous,
I could favor you with sundry touches
Of the paint-smutches with which the Duchess
Heightened the mellowness of her cheek's yellowness
(To get on faster) until at last her
Cheek grew to be one master-plaster
Of mucus and fucus from mere use of ceruse:
In short, she grew from scalp to udder
Just the object to make you shudder.

XVII

You're my friend—
What a thing friendship is, world without end!
How it gives the heart and soul a stir-up
As if somebody broached you a glorious runlet,
And poured out, all lovelily, sparklingly, sunlit,
Our green Moldavia, the streaky syrup,

Cotnar as old as the time of the Druids—
Friendship may match with that monarch of fluids;
Each supples a dry brain, fills you its ins-and-outs,
Gives your life's hourglass a shake when the thin sand doubts
Whether to run on or stop short, and guarantees
Age is not all made of stark sloth and arrant ease.
I have seen my little lady once more,
Jacynth, the gypsy, Berold, and the rest of it,
For to me spoke the Duke, as I told you before;
I always wanted to make a clean breast of it:
And now it is made—why, my heart's blood, that went trickle,
Trickle, but anon, in such muddy driblets,
Is pumped up brisk now, through the main ventricle,
And genially floats me about the giblets.
I'll tell you what I intend to do:
I must see this fellow his sad life through—
He is our Duke, after all,
And I, as he says, but a serf and thrall.
My father was born here, and I inherit
His fame, a chain he bound his son with;
Could I pay in a lump I should prefer it,
But there's no mine to blow up and get done with:
So, I must stay till the end of the chapter.
For, as to our middle-age-manners-adapter,
Be it a thing to be glad on or sorry on,
Some day or other, his head in a morion
And breast in a hauberk, his heels he'll kick up,
Slain by an onslaught fierce of hiccup.
And then, when red doth the sword of our Duke rust.

And its leathern sheath lie o'ergrown with a blue crust,
Then I shall scrape together my earnings;
For, you see, in the churchyard Jacynth reposes,
And our children all went the way of the roses.
It's a long lane that knows no turnings.
One needs but little tackle to travel in;
So, just one stout cloak shall I indue:
And for a staff, what beats the javelin
With which his boars my father pinned you?
And then, for a purpose you shall hear presently,
Taking some Cotnar, a tight plump skinful,
I shall go journeying, who but I, pleasantly!
Sorrow is vain and despondency sinful.
What's a man's age? He must hurry more, that's all;
Cram in a day what his youth took a year to hold:
When we mind labor, then only, we're too old—
What age had Methusalem when he begat Saul?
And at last, as its haven some buffeted ship sees,
(Come all the way from the north-parts with sperm oil)
I hope to get safely out of the turmoil
And arrive one day at the land of the gypsies,
And find my lady, or hear the last news of her
From some old thief and son of Lucifer,
His forehead chapleted green with wreathy hop,
Sunburned all over like an Æthiop.
And when my Cotnar begins to operate
And the tongue of the rogue to run at a proper rate,
And our wine-skin, tight once, shows each flaccid dent,
I shall drop in with—as if by accident—
"You never knew, then, how it all ended,
What fortune good or bad attended

The little lady your Queen befriended?"
—And when that's told me, what's remaining?
This world's too hard for my explaining.
The same wise judge of matters equine
  Who still preferred some slim four-year-old
  To the big-boned stock of mighty Berold,
And, for strong Cotnar, drank French weak wine,
He also must be such a lady's scorner!
  Smooth Jacob still robs homely Esau:
  Now up, now down, the world's one see-saw.
—So, I shall find out some snug corner
Under a hedge, like Orson the wood-knight,
Turn myself round and bid the world good night;
And sleep a sound sleep till the trumpet's blowing
  Wakes me (unless priests cheat us laymen)
To a world where will be no further throwing
  Pearls before swine that can't value them. Amen!

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN EUROPE

Let us begin and carry up this corpse,
    Singing together.
Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes
    Each in its tether
Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
    Cared-for till cock-crow;

Look out if yonder be not day again
Rimming the rock-row!
That's the appropriate country; there, man's thought,
Rarer, intenser,
Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
Chafes in the censer.
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;
Seek we sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture!
All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;
Clouds overcome it;
No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
Circling its summit.
Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights;
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life was the level's and the night's;
He's for the morning.
Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,
'Ware the beholders!
This is our master, famous, calm, and dead,
Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft,
Safe from the weather!
He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
Singing together,
He was a man born with thy face and throat,
Lyric Apollo!
Long he lived nameless; how should Spring take note
Winter would follow?

Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!
Cramped and diminished,
Moaned he, "New measures, other feet anon!
My dance is finished"?
No, that's the world's way: (keep the mountain-side,
Make for the city!)
He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
Over men's pity;
Left play for work, and grappled with the world
Bent on escaping:
"What's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou keepest furled?
Show me their shaping,
Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage—
Give!"—So, he gowned him,
Straight got by heart that book to its last page:
Learned, we found him.
Yea, but we found him bald, too, eyes like lead,
Accents uncertain:
"Time to taste life," another would have said,
"Up with the curtain!"
This man said rather, "Actual life comes next?
Patience a moment!
Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,
Still there's the comment.
Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,
Painful or easy!
Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
Aye, nor feel queasy."
Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
When he had learned it,

When he had gathered all books had to give!
Sooner, he spurned it.
Image the whole, then execute the parts—
Fancy the fabric
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
Ere mortar dab brick!

(Here's the town-gate reached: there's the market-place
Gaping before us.)
Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
(Hearten our chorus!)
That before living he'd learn how to live—
No end to learning:
Earn the means first—God surely will contrive
Use for our earning.
Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes:
Live now or never!"
He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever."
Back to his book then: deeper drooped his head:
Calculus racked him:
Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:
Tussis attacked him.
"Now, master, take a little rest!"—not he!
(Caution redoubled,
Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)
Not a whit troubled,
Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
Fierce as a dragon
He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)
Sucked at the flagon.

Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
Heedless of far gain,
Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
Bad is our bargain!
Was it not great? did not he throw on God,
(He loves the burthen)—
God's task to make the heavenly period
Perfect the earthen?
Did not he magnify the mind, show clear
Just what it all meant?
He would not discount life, as fools do here,
Paid by installment.
He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success
Found, or earth's failure:
"Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered, "Yes!
Hence with life's pale lure!"
That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit:
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.
That, has the world here—should he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find him.
So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
Ground he at grammar;

Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were rife:
While he could stammer
He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!—
Properly based *Oun*—
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De,*
Dead from the waist down.
Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place:
Hail to your purlieus,
All ye highfliers of the feathered race,
Swallows and curlews!
Here's the top-peak; the multitude below
Live, for they can, there:
This man decided not to Live but Know—
Bury this man there?
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects:
Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying.

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME"

(See Edgar's song in *Lear*)

My first thought was, he lied in every word,
That hoary cripple, with malicious eye
Askance to watch the working of his lie
On mine, and mouth scarce able to afford
Suppression of the glee, that pursed and scored
Its edge, at one more victim gained thereby.

What else should he be set for, with his staff?
What, save to waylay with his lies, ensnare
All travelers who might find him posted there,
And ask the road? I guessed what skull-like laugh
Would break, what crutch 'gin write my epitaph
For pastime in the dusty thoroughfare,

If at his counsel I should turn aside
Into the ominous tract which, all agree,
Hides the Dark Tower. Yet acquiescingly
I did turn as he pointed: neither pride
Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,
So much as gladness that some end might be.

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering,
What with my search drawn out through years, my hope
Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope
With that obstreperous joy success would bring,
I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring
My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

As when a sick man very near to death
Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and end
The tears, and takes the farewell of each friend,
And hears one bid the other go, draw breath
Freelier outside ("since all is o'er," he saith,
"And the blow fallen no grieving can amend");

While some discuss if near the other graves
Be room enough for this, and when a day
Suits best for carrying the corpse away,
With care about the banners, scarves, and staves;
And still the man hears all, and only craves
He may not shame such tender love and stay.

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest,
Heard failure prophesied so oft, been writ
So many times among "The Band"—to wit,
The knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed
Their steps—that just to fail as they, seemed best,
And all the doubt was now—should I be fit?

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him,
That hateful cripple, out of his highway
Into the path he pointed. All the day
Had been a dreary one at best, and dim
Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim
Red leer to see the plain catch its estray.

For mark! no sooner was I fairly found
Pledged to the plain, after a pace or two,
Than, pausing to throw backward a last view

O'er the safe road, 'twas gone; gray plain all round:
Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.
I might go on; naught else remained to do.

So, on I went. I think I never saw
Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve;
For flowers—as well expect a cedar grove!
But cockle, spurge, according to their law
Might propagate their kind, with none to awe,
You'd think; a bur had been a treasure-trove.

No! penury, inertness, and grimace,
In some strange sort, were the land's portion. "See
Or shut your eyes," said Nature peevishly,
"It nothing skills; I cannot help my case;
'Tis the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place,
Calcine its clods and set my prisoners free."

If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk
Above its mates, the head was chopped; the bents
Were jealous else. What made those holes and rents
In the dock's harsh swarth leaves, bruised as to balk
All hope of greenness? 'tis a brute must walk
Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents.

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair
In leprosy; thin dry blades pricked the mud
Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.
One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,
Stood stupefied, however he came there;
Thrust out past service from the devil's stud!

Alive? he might be dead for aught I know,
With that red gaunt and colloped neck a-strain,
And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane;
Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe;
I never saw a brute I hated so;
He must be wicked to deserve such pain.

I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.
As a man calls for wine before he fights,
I asked one draft of earlier, happier sights,
Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.
Think first, fight afterwards—the soldier's art;
One taste of the old time sets all to rights.

Not it! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face
Beneath its garniture of curly gold,
Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold
An arm in mine to fix me to the place,
That way he used. Alas, one night's disgrace!
Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

Giles then, the soul of honor—there he stands
Frank as ten years ago when knighted first.
What honest man should dare (he said) he durst.
Good—but the scene shifts—faugh! what hangman hands
Pin to his breast a parchment? His own bands
Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and cursed!

Better this present than a past like that;
Back therefore to my darkening path again!
No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.

Will the night send a howlet or a bat?
I asked; when something on the dismal flat
Came to arrest my thoughts and change their train.

A sudden little river crossed my path
As unexpected as a serpent comes.
No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms;
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath
For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see the wrath
Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spumes.

So petty yet so spiteful! All along,
Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;
Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit
Of mute despair, a suicidal throng;
The river which had done them all the wrong,
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

Which, while I forded—good saints, how I feared
To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,
Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek
For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard!
It may have been a water-rat I speared,
But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's shriek.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.
Now for a better country. Vain presage!
Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage,
Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank
Soil to a plash? Toads in a poisoned tank,
Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage—

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.
What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?
No footprint leading to that horrid mews,
None out of it. Mad brewage set to work
Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk
Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews.

And more than that—a furlong on—why, there!
What bad use was that engine for, that wheel,
Or brake, not wheel—that harrow fit to reel
Men's bodies out like silk? with all the air
Of Tophet's tool, on earth left unaware,
Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth of steel.

Then came a bit of stubbed ground, once a wood,
Next a marsh, it would seem, and now mere earth
Desperate and done with—so a fool finds mirth,
Makes a thing and then mars it, till his mood
Changes and off he goes!—within a rood,
Bog, clay and rubble, sand and stark black dearth.

Now blotches rankling, colored gay and grim,
Now patches where some leanness of the soil's
Broke into moss or substances like boils;
Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in him
Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim
Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils.

And just as far as ever from the end!
Naught in the distance but the evening, naught
To point my footstep further! At the thought,

A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom-friend,
Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing dragon-penned
That brushed my cap—perchance the guide I sought.

For, looking up, aware I somehow grew,
'Spite of the dusk, the plain had given place
All round to mountains—with such name to grace
Mere ugly heights and heaps now stolen in view.
How thus they had surprised me—solve it, you!
How to get from them was no clearer case.

Yet half I seemed to recognize some trick
Of mischief happened to me, God knows when—
In a bad dream perhaps. Here ended, then,
Progress this way. When, in the very nick
Of giving up, one time more, came a click
As when a trap shuts—you're inside the den!

Burningly it came on me all at once,
This was the place! those two hills on the right,
Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight;
While to the left, a tall scalped mountain . . . Dunce,
Dotard, a-dozing at the very nonce,
After a life spent training for the sight!

What in the midst lay but the Tower itself?
The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart,
Built of brown stone, without a counterpart
In the whole world. The tempest's mocking elf
Points to the shipman thus the unseen shelf
He strikes on, only when the timbers start.

Not see? because of night perhaps?—why, day
Came back again for that! before it left,
The dying sunset kindled through a cleft;
The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,
Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay—
"Now stab and end the creature—to the heft!"

Not hear? when noise was everywhere! it tolled
Increasing like a bell. Names in my ears
Of all the lost adventurers my peers—
How such a one was strong, and such was bold,
And such was fortunate, yet each of old
Lost, lost! one moment knelled the woe of years.

There they stood, ranged along the hillsides, met
To view the last of me, a living frame
For one more picture! in a sheet of flame
I saw them and I knew them all. And yet
Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,
And blew. *"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came."*

HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY

I only knew one poet in my life:
And this, or something like it, was his way.

You saw go up and down Valladolid,
A man of mark, to know next time you saw.
His very serviceable suit of black

Was courtly once and conscientious still,
And many might have worn it, though none did;
The cloak, that somewhat shone and showed the threads,
Had purpose, and the ruff, significance.
He walked and tapped the pavement with his cane,
Scenting the world, looking it full in face,
An old dog, bald and blindish, at his heels.
They turned up, now, the alley by the church,
That leads nowhither; now, they breathed themselves
On the main promenade just at the wrong time;
You'd come upon his scrutinizing hat,
Making a peaked shade blacker than itself
Against the single window spared some house
Intact yet with its moldered Moorish work—
Or else surprise the ferrel of his stick
Trying the mortar's temper 'tween the chinks
Of some new shop a-building, French and fine.
He stood and watched the cobbler at his trade,
The man who slices lemons into drink,
The coffee-roaster's brazier, and the boys
That volunteer to help him turn its winch.
He glanced o'er books on stalls with half an eye,
And fly-leaf ballads on the vender's string,
And broad-edge bold-print posters by the wall.
He took such cognizance of men and things,
If any beat a horse, you felt he saw;
If any cursed a woman, he took note;
Yet stared at nobody—you stared at him,
And found, less to your pleasure than surprise,
He seemed to know you and expect as much.
So, next time that a neighbor's tongue was loosed,

It marked the shameful and notorious fact,
We had among us, not so much a spy,
As a recording chief-inquisitor,
The town's true master if the town but knew!
We merely kept a governor for form,
While this man walked about and took account
Of all thought, said and acted, then went home,
And wrote it fully to our Lord the King
Who has an itch to know things, he knows why,
And reads them in his bedroom of a night.
Oh, you might smile! there wanted not a touch,
A tang of . . . well, it was not wholly ease
As back into your mind the man's look came.
Stricken in years a little—such a brow
His eyes had to live under!—clear as flint
On either side the formidable nose
Curved, cut and colored like an eagle's claw.
Had he to do with A's surprising fate?
When altogether old B disappeared
And young C got his mistress—was't our friend,
His letter to the King, that did it all?
What paid the bloodless man for so much pains?
Our Lord the King has favorites manifold,
And shifts his ministry some once a month;
Our city gets new governors at whiles—
But never word or sign, that I could hear,
Notified to this man about the streets
The King's approval of those letters conned
The last thing duly at the dead of night.
Did the man love his office? Frowned our Lord,
Exhorting when none heard—"Beseech me not!

Too far above my people—beneath me!
I set the watch—how should the people know?
Forget them, keep me all the more in mind!"
Was some such understanding 'twixt the two?

I found no truth in one report at least—
That if you tracked him to his home, down lanes
Beyond the Jewry, and as clean to pace,
You found he ate his supper in a room
Blazing with lights, four Titians on the walls,
And twenty naked girls to change his plate!
Poor man, he lived another kind of life
In that new stuccoed third house by the bridge,
Fresh-painted, rather smart than otherwise!
The whole street might o'erlook him as he sat,
Leg crossing leg, one foot on the dog's back,
Playing a decent cribbage with his maid
(Jacynth, you're sure her name was) o'er the cheese
And fruit, three red halves of starved winter-pears,
Or treat of radishes in April. Nine,
Ten, struck the church clock, straight to bed went he.

My father, like the man of sense he was,
Would point him out to me a dozen times;
"'St—'St," he'd whisper, "the Corregidor!"
I had been used to think that personage
Was one with lacquered breeches, lustrous belt,
And feathers like a forest in his hat,
Who blew a trumpet and proclaimed the news,
Announced the bull-fights, gave each church its turn,
And memorized the miracle in vogue!

He had a great observance from us boys;
We were in error; that was not the man.

I'd like now, yet had haply been afraid,
To have just looked, when this man came to die,
And seen who lined the clean gay garret-sides
And stood about the neat low truckle-bed,
With the heavenly manner of relieving guard.
Here had been, mark, the general-in-chief,
Through a whole campaign of the world's life and death,
Doing the King's work all the dim day long,
In his old coat and up to knees in mud,
Smoked like a herring, dining on a crust—
And, now the day was won, relieved at once!
No further show or need for that old coat,
You are sure, for one thing! Bless us, all the while
How sprucely we are dressed out, you and I!
A second, and the angels alter that.
Well, I could never write a verse—could you?
Let's to the Prado and make the most of time.

FRA LIPPO LIPPI

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
You need not clap your torches to my face.
Zooks, what's to blame? you think you see a monk!
What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,
And here you catch me at an alley's end
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?

The Carmine's my cloister: hunt it up,
Do—harry out, if you must show your zeal,
Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole,
And nip each softling of a wee white mouse,
Weke, weke, that's crept to keep him company!
Aha, you know your betters! Then, you'll take
Your hand away that's fiddling on my throat,
And please to know me likewise. Who am I?
Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend
Three streets off—he's a certain . . . how d'ye call?
Master—a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,
I' the house that caps the corner. Boh! you were best!
Remember and tell me, the day you're hanged,
How you affected such a gullet's-gripe!
But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves
Pick up a manner nor discredit you:
Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets
And count fair prize what comes into their net?
He's Judas to a tittle, that man is!
Just such a face! Why, sir, you make amends.
Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hangdogs go
Drink out this quarter-florin to the health
Of the munificent House that harbors me
(And many more beside, lads! more beside!)
And all's come square again. I'd like his face—
His, elbowing on his comrade in the door
With the pike and lantern—for the slave that holds
John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair
With one hand ("Look you, now," as who should say)
And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!
It's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,

A wood-coal, or the like? or you should see!
Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.
What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,
You know them and they take you? like enough!
I saw the proper twinkle in your eye—
'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.
Let's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.
Here's spring come, and the nights one makes up bands
To roam the town and sing out carnival,
And I've been three weeks shut within my mew,
A-painting for the great man, saints and saints
And saints again. I could not paint all night—
Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh air.
There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whifts of song—
Flower o' the broom,
Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!
Flower o' the quince,
I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?
Flower o' the thyme—and so on. Round they went.
Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter
Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight—three slim shapes,
And a face that looked up . . . zooks, sir, flesh and blood,
That's all I'm made of! Into shreds it went,
Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
All the bed-furniture—a dozen knots,
There was a ladder! Down I let myself,
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and so dropped,
And after them. I came up with the fun

Hard by Saint Laurence, hail fellow, well met—
Flower o' the rose,
If I've been merry, what matter who knows?
And so as I was stealing back again
To get to bed and have a bit of sleep
Ere I rise up tomorrow and go work
On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast
With his great round stone to subdue the flesh,
You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I see!
Though your eye twinkles still, you shake your head—
Mine's shaved—a monk, you say—the sting's in that!
If Master Cosimo announced himself,
Mum's the word naturally; but a monk!
Come, what am I a beast for? tell us, now!
I was a baby when my mother died
And father died and left me in the street.
I starved there, God knows how, a year or two
On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds and shucks,
Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty day,
My stomach being empty as your hat,
The wind doubled me up and down I went.
Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one hand
(Its fellow was a stinger as I knew),
And so along the wall, over the bridge,
By the straight cut to the convent. Six words there,
While I stood munching my first bread that month:
"So, boy, you've minded," quoth the good fat father,
Wiping his own mouth—'twas refection-time—
"To quit this very miserable world?
Will you renounce" . . . "the mouthful of bread?"
thought I;

By no means! Brief, they made a monk of me;
I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,
Palace, farm, villa, shop, and banking-house,
Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici
Have given their hearts to—all at eight years old.
Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,
'Twas not for nothing—the good bellyful,
The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,
And day-long blessed idleness beside!
"Let's see what the urchin's fit for"—that came next.
Not overmuch their way, I must confess.
Such a to-do! They tried me with their books;
Lord, they'd have taught me Latin in pure waste!
Flower o' the clove,
All the Latin I construe is "amo," I love!
But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets
Eight years together, as my fortune was,
Watching folk's faces to know who will fling
The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he desires,
And who will curse or kick him for his pains—
Which gentleman processional and fine,
Holding a candle to the Sacrament,
Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch
The droppings of the wax to sell again,
Or holla for the Eight and have him whipped—
How say I?—nay, which dog bites, which lets drop
His bone from the heap of offal in the street—
Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,
He learns the look of things, and none the less
For admonition from the hunger-pinch.
I had a store of such remarks, be sure,

Which, after I found leisure, turned to use.
I drew men's faces on my copy books,
Scrawled them within the antiphonary's marge,
Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,
Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and B's,
And made a string of pictures of the world
Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,
On the wall, the bench, the door. The monks looked black.
"Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him out, d'ye say?
In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.
What if at last we get our man of parts,
We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese
And Preaching Friars, to do our church up fine
And put the front on it that ought to be!"
And hereupon he bade me daub away.
Thank you! my head being crammed, the walls a blank,
Never was such prompt disemburdening.
First, every sort of monk, the black and white,
I drew them, fat and lean: then, folk at church,
From good old gossips waiting to confess
Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends—
To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,
Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there
With the little children round him in a row
Of admiration, half for his beard and half
For that white anger of his victim's son
Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,
Signing himself with the other because of Christ
(Whose sad face on the cross sees only this
After the passion of a thousand years)

Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her head,
(Which the intense eyes looked through) came at eve
On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a loaf,
Her pair of earrings and a bunch of flowers
(The brute took growling), prayed, and so was gone.
I painted all, then cried, "'Tis ask and have;
Choose, for more's ready!"—laid the ladder flat,
And showed my covered bit of cloister-wall.
The monks closed in a circle and praised loud
Till checked, taught what to see and not to see,
Being simple bodies—"That's the very man!
Look at the boy who stoops to pat the dog!
That woman's like the Prior's niece who comes
To care about his asthma: it's the life!"
But there my triumph's straw-fire flared and funked;
Their betters took their turn to see and say:
The Prior and the learned pulled a face
And stopped all that in no time. "How? what's here?
Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!
Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true
As much as pea and pea! It's devil's-game!
Your business is not to catch men with show,
With homage to the perishable clay,
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.
Your business is to paint the souls of men—
Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . . . no, it's not . . .
It's vapor done up like a new-born babe—
(In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)
It's . . . well, what matters talking, it's the soul!
Give us no more of body than shows soul!

Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God,
That sets us praising—why not stop with him?
Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head
With wonder at lines, colors, and what not?
Paint the soul; never mind the legs and arms!
Rub all out; try at it a second time.
Oh, that white smallish female with the breasts,
She's just my niece . . . Herodias, I would say-
Who went and danced and got men's heads cut off!
Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I ask?
A fine way to paint soul, by painting body
So ill the eye can't stop there, must go further,
And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for white
When what you put for yellow's simply black,
And any sort of meaning looks intense
When all beside itself means and looks naught.
Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,
The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint—is it so pretty
You can't discover if it means hope, fear,
Sorrow, or joy? Won't beauty go with these?
Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,
Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,
And then add soul and heighten them three-fold?
Or say there's beauty with no soul at all—
(I never saw it—put the case the same—)
If you get simple beauty and naught else,
You get about the best thing God invents:
That's somewhat: and you'll find the soul you have
missed,

Within yourself, when you return Him thanks.
"Rub all out!" Well, well, there's my life, in short,
And so the thing has gone on ever since.
I'm grown a man no doubt; I've broken bounds:
You should not take a fellow eight years old
And make him swear to never kiss the girls.
I'm my own master, paint now as I please—
Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!
Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in front—
Those great rings serve more purposes than just
To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!
And yet the old schooling sticks, the old grave eyes
Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
The heads shake still—"It's art's decline, my son!
You're not of the true painters, great and old;
Brother Angelico's the man, you'll find;
Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer:
Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the third!"
Flower o' the pine,
You keep your mist . . . manners, and I'll stick to mine!
I'm not the third, then: bless us, they must know!
Don't you think they're the likeliest to know,
They with their Latin? So, I swallow my rage,
Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint
To please them—sometimes do and sometimes don't;
For, doing most, there's pretty sure to come
A turn, some warm eve finds me at my saints—
A laugh, a cry, the business of the world—
(Flower o' the peach,
Death for us all, and his own life for each!)

And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs over,
The world and life's too big to pass for a dream,
And I do these wild things in sheer despite,
And play the fooleries you catch me at,
In pure rage! The old mill-horse, out at grass
After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so,
Although the miller does not preach to him
The only good of grass is to make chaff.
What would men have? Do they like grass or no—
May they or mayn't they? All I want's the thing
Settled forever one way. As it is,
You tell too many lies and hurt yourself:
You don't like what you only like too much,
You do like what, if given you at your word,
You find abundantly detestable.
For me, I think I speak as I was taught;
I always see the garden and God there
A-making man's wife: and, my lesson learned,
The value and significance of flesh,
I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.

You understand me: I'm a beast, I know.
But see, now—why, I see as certainly
As that the morning-star's about to shine,
What will hap some day. We've a youngster here
Comes to our convent, studies what I do,
Slouches and stares and lets no atom drop:
His name is Guidi—he'll not mind the monks—
They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them talk—
He picks my practice up—he'll paint apace.
I hope so—though I never live so long,

I know what's sure to follow. You be judge!
You speak no Latin more than I, belike;
However, you're my man, you've seen the world
—The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights, and shades
Changes, surprises—and God made it all!
—For what? Do you feel thankful, aye or no,
For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountain round it and the sky above,
Much more the figures of man, woman, child,
These are the frame to? What's it all about?
To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,
Wondered at? oh, this last of course!—you say.
But why not do as well as say—paint these
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?
God's works—paint any one, and count it crime
To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His works
Are here already; nature is complete:
Suppose you reproduce her—(which you can't)
There's no advantage! you must beat her, then."
For, don't you mark? we're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,
Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,
And trust me but you should, though! How much more,
If I drew higher things with the same truth!
That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,

Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh,
It makes me mad to see what men shall do
And we in our graves! This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good:
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.
"Aye, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"
Strikes in the Prior: "when your meaning's plain
It does not say to folk—remember matins,
Or, mind you fast next Friday!" Why, for this
What need of art at all? A skull and bones,
Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or, what's best,
A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.
I painted a Saint Laurence six months since
At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style:
"How looks my painting, now the scaffold's down?"
I ask a brother: "Hugely," he returns—
"Already not one phiz of your three slaves
Who turn the Deacon off his toasted side,
But's scratched and prodded to our heart's content,
The pious people have so eased their own
With coming to say prayers there in a rage:
We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.
Expect another job this time next year,
For pity and religion grow i' the crowd—
Your painting serves its purpose!" Hang the fools!

—That is—you'll not mistake an idle word
Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God wot,
Tasting the air this spicy night which turns
The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!
Oh, the church knows! don't misreport me, now!

It's natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself:
And hearken how I plot to make amends.
I have bethought me: I shall paint a piece
. . . There's for you! Give me six months, then go, see
Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the nuns!
They want a cast o' my office. I shall paint
God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,
Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood,
Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet
As puff on puff of grated orris-root
When ladies crowd to Church at midsummer.
And then i' the front, of course a saint or two—
Saint John, because he saves the Florentines,
Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black and white
The convent's friends and gives them a long day,
And Job, I must have him there past mistake,
The man of Uz (and Us without the z,
Painters who need his patience). Well, all these
Secured at their devotion, up shall come
Out of a corner when you least expect,
As one by a dark stair into a great light,
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I!—
Mazed, motionless, and moonstruck—I'm the man!
Back I shrink—what is this I see and hear?
I, caught up with my monk's-things by mistake,
My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,
I, in this presence, this pure company!
Where's a hole, where's a corner for escape?
Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing
Forward, puts out a soft palm—"Not so fast!"

—Addresses the celestial presence, "nay—
He made you and devised you, after all,
Though he's none of you! Could Saint John there draw—
His camel-hair make up a painting-brush?
We come to brother Lippo for all that,
Iste perfecit opus!" So, all smile—
I shuffle sideways with my blushing face
Under the cover of a hundred wings
Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you're gay
And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,
Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops
The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle off
To some safe bench behind, not letting go
The palm of her, the little lily thing
That spoke the good word for me in the nick,
Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint Lucy, I would say.
And so all's saved for me, and for the church
A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence!
Your hand, sir, and good-by: no lights, no lights!
The street's hushed, and I know my own way back,
Don't fear me! There's the gray beginning. Zooks!

ANDREA DEL SARTO

Called "The Faultless Painter"

But do not let us quarrel any more.
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,

Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him—but tomorrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up tomorrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
Tomorrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require:
It saves a model. So! keep looking so—
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
There's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers everything—
All in a twilight, you and I alike

—You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone you know)—but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober, pleasant Fiesole.
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now looks the life He makes us lead;
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel He laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example—turn your head—
All that's behind us! You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak:
And that cartoon, the second from the door
—It is the thing, Love! so such thing should be—
Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!

No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
I do what many dream of, all their lives,
—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive—you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat—
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter)—so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word—
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray

Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain,
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate who died five years ago.
('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art—for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right—that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the stretch—
Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?

Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I, painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls

Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know—
'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was—to reach and stay there; since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife"—
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)
"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute

As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!
Aye, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?)
If really there was such a chance, so lost—
Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, love—come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? He waits outside?
Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans?
More gaming debts to pay? You smiled for that?

Well, let smiles buy me! Have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? Tomorrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
What's better and what's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age tonight.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis!—it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? You see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.

They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems tonight.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo, and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH

ROME, 15—

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well—
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,

And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
—Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk:
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my church
—What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,

And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not, I! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli,*
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pan and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Savior at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's moldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve

My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work:
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals, and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!

Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis,* all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a visor and a Term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask,
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—
And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
—Aye, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf—at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

CLEON

"As certain also of your own poets have said"—

Cleon the poet (from the sprinkled isles,
Lily on lily, that o'erlace the sea,
And laugh their pride when the light wave lisps
"Greece")—
To Protus in his Tyranny: much health!

They give thy letter to me, even now;
I read and seem as if I heard thee speak.
The master of thy galley still unlades
Gift after gift; they block my court at last
And pile themselves along its portico
Royal with sunset, like a thought of thee;
And one white she-slave from the group dispersed
Of black and white slaves (like the checker-work
Pavement, at once my nation's work and gift,
Now covered with this settle-down of doves),
One lyric woman, in her crocus vest
Woven of sea-wools, with her two white hands
Commends to me the strainer and the cup
Thy lip hath bettered ere it blesses mine.

Well-counseled, king, in thy munificence!
For so shall men remark, in such an act
Of love for him whose song gives life its joy,
Thy recognition of the use of life;
Nor call thy spirit barely adequate
To help on life in straight ways, broad enough

For vulgar souls, by ruling and the rest.
Thou, in the daily building of thy tower—
Whether in fierce and sudden spasms of toil,
Or through dim lulls of unapparent growth,
Or when the general work 'mid good acclaim
Climbed with the eye to cheer the architect—
Didst ne'er engage in work for mere work's sake—
Hadst ever in thy heart the luring hope
Of some eventual rest a-top of it,
Whence, all the tumult of the building hushed,
Thou first of men mightst look out to the East.
The vulgar saw thy tower, thou sawest the sun.
For this, I promise on thy festival
To pour libation, looking o'er the sea,
Making this slave narrate thy fortunes, speak
Thy great words, and describe thy royal face—
Wishing thee wholly where Zeus lives the most,
Within the eventual element of calm.

Thy letter's first requirement meets me here.
It is as thou hast heard: in one short life
I, Cleon, have effected all those things
Thou wonderingly dost enumerate.
That epos on thy hundred plates of gold
Is mine—and also mine the little chant,
So sure to rise from every fishing-bark
When, lights at prow, the seamen haul their net.
The image of the sun-god on the phare,
Men turn from the sun's self to see, is mine;
The Pœcile, o'er-storied its whole length,
As thou didst hear, with painting, is mine too.

I know the true proportions of a man
And woman also, not observed before;
And I have written three books on the soul,
Proving absurd all written hitherto,
And putting us to ignorance again.
For music—why, I have combined the moods,
Inventing one. In brief, all arts are mine;
Thus much the people know and recognize,
Throughout our seventeen islands. Marvel not.
We of these latter days, with greater mind
Than our forerunners, since more composite,
Look not so great, beside their simple way,
To a judge who only sees one way at once,
One mind-point and no other at a time—
Compares the small part of a man of us
With some whole man of the heroic age,
Great in his way—not ours, nor meant for ours.
And ours is greater, had we skill to know:
For, what we call this life of men on earth,
This sequence of the soul's achievements here
Being, as I find much reason to conceive,
Intended to be viewed eventually
As a great whole, not analyzed to parts,
But each part having reference to all—
How shall a certain part, pronounced complete,
Endure effacement by another part?
Was the thing done?—then, what's to do again?
See, in the checkered pavement opposite,
Suppose the artist made a perfect rhomb,
And next a lozenge, then a trapezoid—
He did not overlay them, superimpose

The new upon the old and blot it out,
But laid them on a level in his work,
Making at last a picture; there it lies.
So, first the perfect separate forms were made,
The portions of mankind; and after, so,
Occurred the combination of the same.
For where had been a progress, otherwise?
Mankind, made up of all the single men—
In such a synthesis the labor ends.
Now mark me! those divine men of old time
Have reached, thou sayest well, each at one point
The outside verge that rounds our faculty;
And where they reached, who can do more than reach?
It takes but little water just to touch
At some one point the inside of a sphere,
And, as we turn the sphere, touch all the rest
In due succession; but the finer air
Which not so palpably nor obviously,
Though no less universally, can touch
The whole circumference of that emptied sphere,
Fills it more fully than the water did;
Holds thrice the weight of water in itself
Resolved into a subtler element.
And yet the vulgar call the sphere first full
Up to the visible height—and after, void;
Not knowing air's more hidden properties.
And thus our soul, misknown, cries out to Zeus
To vindicate his purpose in our life:
Why stay we on the earth unless to grow?
Long since, I imaged, wrote the fiction out,
That he or other god descended here

And, once for all, showed simultaneously
What, in its nature, never can be shown,
Piecemeal or in succession—showed, I say,
The worth both absolute and relative
Of all his children from the birth of time,
His instruments for all appointed work.
I now go on to image—might we hear
The judgment which should give the due to each,
Show where the labor lay and where the ease,
And prove Zeus' self, the latent everywhere!
This is a dream—but no dream, let us hope,
That years and days, the summers and the springs,
Follow each other with unwaning powers.
The grapes which dye thy wine are richer far,
Through culture, than the wild wealth of the rock;
The suave plum than the savage-tasted drupe;
The pastured honey-bee drops choicer sweet;
The flowers turn double, and the leaves turn flowers;
That young and tender crescent-moon, thy slave,
Sleeping above her robe as buoyed by clouds,
Refines upon the women of my youth.
What, and the soul alone deteriorates?
I have not chanted verse like Homer, no—
Nor swept string like Terpander, no—nor carved
And painted men like Phidias and his friend:
I am not great as they are, point by point.
But I have entered into sympathy
With these four, running these into one soul,
Who, separate, ignored each other's art.
Say, is it nothing that I know them all?
The wild flower was the larger; I have dashed

Rose-blood upon its petals, pricked its cup's
Honey with wine, and driven its seed to fruit,
And show a better flower if not so large:
I stand myself. Refer this to the gods
Whose gift alone it is! which, shall I dare
(All pride apart) upon the absurd pretext
That such a gift by chance lay in my hand,
Discourse of lightly or depreciate?
It might have fallen to another's hand: what then?
I pass too surely: let at least truth stay!

And next, of what thou followest on to ask.
This being with me as I declare, O king,
My works, in all these varicolored kinds,
So done by me, accepted so by men—
Thou askest, if (my soul thus in men's hearts)
I must not be accounted to attain
The very crown and proper end of life?
Inquiring thence how, now life closeth up,
I face death with success in my right hand:
Whether I fear death less than dost thyself
The fortunate of men? "For" (writest thou)
"Thou leavest much behind, while I leave naught.
Thy life stays in the poems men shall sing,
The pictures men shall study; while my life,
Complete and whole now in its power and joy,
Dies altogether with my brain and arm,
Is lost indeed; since, what survives myself?
The brazen statue to o'erlook my grave,
Set on the promontory which I named.
And that—some supple courtier of my heir

Shall use its robed and sceptered arm, perhaps,
To fix the rope to, which best drags it down.
I go then: triumph thou, who dost not go!"

Nay, thou art worthy of hearing my whole mind.
Is this apparent, when thou turn'st to muse
Upon the scheme of earth and man in chief,
That admiration grows as knowledge grows?
That imperfection means perfection hid,
Reserved in part, to grace the after-time?
If, in the morning of philosophy,
Ere aught had been recorded, nay perceived,
Thou, with the light now in thee, couldst have looked
On all earth's tenantry, from worm to bird,
Ere man, her last, appeared upon the stage—
Thou wouldst have seen them perfect, and deduced
The perfectness of others yet unseen.
Conceding which—had Zeus then questioned thee,
"Shall I go on a step, improve on this,
Do more for visible creatures than is done?"
Thou wouldst have answered, "Aye, by making each
Grow conscious in himself—by that alone.
All's perfect else: the shell sucks fast the rock,
The fish strikes through the sea, the snake both swims
And slides, forth range the beasts, the birds take flight,
Till life's mechanics can no further go—
And all this joy in natural life is put
Like fire from off thy finger into each,
So exquisitely perfect is the same.
But 'tis pure fire, and they mere matter are;
It has them, not they it: and so I choose

For man, thy last premeditated work
(If I might add a glory to the scheme),
That a third thing should stand apart from both,
A quality arise within his soul,
Which, introactive, made to supervise
And feel the force it has, may view itself,
And so be happy." Man might live at first
The animal life: but is there nothing more?
In due time, let him critically learn
How he lives; and, the more he gets to know
Of his own life's adaptabilities,
The more joy-giving will his life become.
Thus man, who hath this quality, is best.

But thou, king, hadst more reasonably said:
"Let progress end at once—man make no step
Beyond the natural man, the better beast,
Using his senses, not the sense of sense."
In man there's failure, only since he left
The lower and inconscious forms of life.
We called it an advance, the rendering plain
Man's spirit might grow conscious of man's life,
And, by new lore so added to the old,
Take each step higher over the brute's head.
This grew the only life, the pleasure-house,
Watch-tower, and treasure-fortress of the soul,
Which whole surrounding flats of natural life
Seemed only fit to yield subsistence to;
A tower that crowns a country. But alas,
The soul now climbs it just to perish there!
For thence we have discovered ('tis no dream—

We know this, which we had not else perceived)
That there's a world of capability
For joy, spread round about us, meant for us,
Inviting us; and still the soul craves all,
And still the flesh replies, "Take no jot more
Than ere thou clombst the tower to look abroad!
Nay, so much less as that fatigue has brought
Deduction to it." We struggle, fain to enlarge
Our bounded physical recipiency,
Increase our power, supply fresh oil to life,
Repair the waste of age and sickness: no,
It skills not! life's inadequate to joy,
As the soul sees joy, tempting life to take.
They praise a fountain in my garden here
Wherein a Naiad sends the water-bow
Thin from her tube; she smiles to see it rise.
What if I told her, it is just a thread
From that great river which the hills shut up,
And mock her with my leave to take the same?
The artificer has given her one small tube
Past power to widen or exchange—what boots
To know she might spout oceans if she could?
She cannot lift beyond her first thin thread:
And so a man can use but a man's joy
While he sees God's. Is it for Zeus to boast,
"See, man, how happy I live, and despair—
That I may be still happier—for thy use!"
If this were so, we could not thank our Lord,
As hearts beat on to doing; 'tis not so—
Malice it is not. Is it carelessness?
Still, no. If care—where is the sign? I ask,

And get no answer, and agree in sum,
O king, with thy profound discouragement,
Who seest the wider but to sigh the more.
Most progress is most failure: thou sayest well.

The last point now:—thou dost except a case—
Holding joy not impossible to one
With artist-gifts—to such a man as I
Who leave behind me living works indeed;
For, such a poem, such a painting lives.
What? Dost thou verily trip upon a word,
Confound the accurate view of what joy is
(Caught somewhat clearer by my eyes than thine)
With feeling joy? confound the knowing how
And showing how to live (my faculty)
With actually living?—Otherwise
Where is the artist's vantage o'er the king?
Because in my great epos I display
How divers men young, strong, fair, wise, can act—
Is this as though I acted? If I paint,
Carve the young Phœbus, am I therefore young?
Methinks I'm older that I bowed myself
The many years of pain that taught me art!
Indeed, to know is something, and to prove
How all this beauty might be enjoyed, is more:
But, knowing naught, to enjoy is something, too.
Yon rower, with the molded muscles there,
Lowering the sail, is nearer it than I.
I can write love-odes: thy fair slave's an ode.
I get to sing of love, when grown too gray
For being beloved: she turns to that young man,

The muscles all a-ripple on his back.
I know the joy of kingship: well, thou art king!

"But," sayest thou—and I marvel, I repeat,
To find thee trip on such a mere word—"what
Thou writest, paintest, stays; that does not die:
Sappho survives, because we sing her songs,
And Æschylus, because we read his plays!"
Why, if they live still, let them come and take
Thy slave in my despite, drink from thy cup,
Speak in my place. Thou diest while I survive?
Say rather that my fate is deadlier still,
In this, that every day my sense of joy
Grows more acute, my soul (intensified
By power and insight) more enlarged, more keen;
While every day my hairs fall more and more,
My hand shakes, and the heavy years increase—
The horror quickening still from year to year,
The consummation coming past escape,
When I shall know most, and yet least enjoy—
When all my works wherein I prove my worth,
Being present still to mock me in men's mouths,
Alive still, in the praise of such as thou,
I, I the feeling, thinking, acting man,
The man who loved his life so overmuch,
Sleep in my urn. It is so horrible,
I dare at times imagine to my need
Some future state revealed to us by Zeus,
Unlimited in capability
For joy, as this is in desire for joy,
—To seek which, the joy-hunger forces us:

That, stung by straitness of our life, made strait
On purpose to make prized the life at large—
Freed by the throbbing impulse we call death,
We burst there as the worm into the fly,
Who, while a worm still, wants his wings. But no!
Zeus has not yet revealed it; and alas,
He must have done so, were it possible!

Live long and happy, and in that thought die:
Glad for what was! Farewell. And for the rest,
I cannot tell thy messenger aright
Where to deliver what he bears of thine
To one called Paulus; we have heard his fame
Indeed, if Christus be not one with him—
I know not, nor am troubled much to know.
Thou canst not think a mere barbarian Jew,
As Paulus proves to be, one circumcised,
Hath access to a secret shut from us?
Thou wrongest our philosophy, O king,
In stooping to inquire of such an one,
As if his answer could impose at all!
He writeth, doth he? Well, and he may write.
Oh, the Jew findeth scholars! Certain slaves
Who touched on this same isle, preached him and Christ;
And (as I gathered from a bystander)
Their doctrine could be held by no sane man.

ONE WORD MORE

I

There they are, my fifty men and women
Naming me the fifty poems finished!
Take them, Love, the book and me together:
Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

II

Rafael made a century of sonnets,
Made and wrote them in a certain volume
Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
Else he only used to draw Madonnas:
These, the world might view—but one, the volume.
Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs you.
Did she live and love it all her lifetime?
Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,
Die, and let it drop beside her pillow
Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,
Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving—
Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,
Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

III

You and I would rather read that volume
(Taken to his beating bosom by it),
Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael,
Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas—

Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,
Her, that visits Florence in a vision,
Her, that's left with lilies in the Louvre—
Seen by us and all the world in circle.

IV

You and I will never read that volume.
Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple
Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.
Guido Reni dying, all Bologna
Cried, and the world cried too, "Ours, the treasure!"
Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

V

Dante once prepared to paint an angel:
Whom to please? You whisper "Beatrice."
While he mused and traced it and retraced it
(Peradventure with a pen corroded
Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,
When, his left hand i' the hair o' the wicked,
Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,
Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,
Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle,
Let the wretch go festering through Florence)—
Dante, who loved well because he hated,
Hated wickedness that hinders loving,
Dante standing, studying his angel—
In there broke the folk of his Inferno.
Says he—"Certain people of importance"

Did not finish drawing because
had use name yet to write of

(Such he gave his daily, dreadful line to)
"Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet."
Says the poet—"Then I stopped my painting."

VI

You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante—
Would we not?—than read a fresh Inferno.

VII

You and I will never see that picture.
While he mused on love and Beatrice,
While he softened o'er his outlined angel,
In they broke, those "people of importance":
We and Bice bear the loss forever.

VIII

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?
This: no artist lives and loves, that longs not
Once, and only once, and for one only
(Ah, the prize!), to find his love a language
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient—
Using nature that's an art to others,
Not, this one time, art that's turned his nature.
Aye, of all the artists living, loving,
None but would forego his proper dowry—
Does he paint? He fain would write a poem—
Does he write? He fain would paint a picture,

Put to proof art alien to the artist's,
Once, and only once, and for one only,
So to be the man and leave the artist,
Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

IX

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!
He who smites the rock and spreads the water,
Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him,
Even he, the minute makes immortal,
Proves, perchance, but mortal in the minute,
Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.
While he smites, how can he but remember,
So he smote before, in such a peril,
When they stood and mocked—"Shall smiting help us?"
When they drank and sneered—"A stroke is easy!"
When they wiped their mouths and went their journey,
Throwing him for thanks—"But drought was pleasant."
Thus old memories mar the actual triumph;
Thus the doing savors of disrelish;
Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;
O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,
Carelessness or consciousness—the gesture.
For he bears an ancient wrong about him,
Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,
Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude—
"How shouldst thou, of all men, smite, and save us?"
Guesses what is like to prove the sequel—
"Egypt's flesh-pots—nay, the drought was better."

X

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant
Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,
Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.
Never dares the man put off the prophet.

XI

Did he love one face from out the thousands
(Were she Jethro's daughter, white and wifely,
Were she but the Ethiopian bondslave),
He would envy yon dumb patient camel,
Keeping a reserve of scanty water
Meant to save his own life in the desert;
Ready in the desert to deliver
(Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)
Hoard and life together for his mistress.

XII

I shall never, in the years remaining,
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,
Make you music that should all-express me;
So it seems: I stand on my attainment.
This of verse alone, one life allows me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.
Other heights in other lives, God willing:
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!

XIII

Yet a semblance of resource avails us—
Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize it.
Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,
Lines I write the first time and the last time.
He who works in fresco, steals a hair-brush,
Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,
Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,
Makes a strange art of an art familiar,
Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets.
He who blows through bronze may breathe through silver,
Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess.
He who writes may write for once as I do.

XIV

Love, you saw me gather men and women,
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
Enter each and all, and use their service.
Speak from every mouth—the speech, a poem.
Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,
Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving:
I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's,
Karshish, Cleon, Norbert, and the fifty.
Let me speak this once in my true person,
Not as Lippo, Roland, or Andrea,
Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence:
Pray you, look on these my men and women,
Take and keep my fifty poems finished;
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also!
Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things.

XV

Not but that you know me! Lo, the moon's self!
Here in London, yonder late in Florence,
Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured.
Curving on a sky imbrued with color,
Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,
Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.
Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato,
Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,
Perfect till the nightingales applauded.
Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,
Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs,
Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver,
Goes dispiritedly, glad to finish.

XVI

What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy?
Nay: for if that moon could love a mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),
All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos),
She would turn a new side to her mortal,
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,
Blind to Galileo on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—him, even!
Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal—
When she turns round, comes again in heaven,
Opens out anew for worse or better!
Proves she like some portent of an iceberg

Swimming full upon the ship it founders,
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals?
Proves she as the paved work of a sapphire
Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?
Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu
Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest,
Stand upon the paved work of a sapphire.
Like the bodied heaven in his clearness
Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved work,
When they ate and drank and saw God also!

XVII

What were seen? None knows, none ever shall know.
Only this is sure—the sight were other,
Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,
Dying now impoverished here in London.
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her!

XVIII

This I say of me, but think of you, Love!
This to you—yourself my moon of poets!
Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder,
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you!
There, in turn I stand with them and praise you—
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,

Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

XIX

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it,
Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom.

ABT VOGLER

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZING UPON THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION)

Would that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,
Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,
Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when Solomon willed
Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,
Man, brute, reptile, fly—alien of end and of aim,
Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-deep removed—
Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable Name,
And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess he loved!

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building of mine,
This which my keys in a crowd pressed and importuned to raise!
Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now and now combine,
Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his praise!
And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge down to hell,
Burrow awhile and build broad on the roots of things,
Then up again swim into sight, having based me my palace well,
Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether springs.

And another would mount and march, like the excellent minion he was,
Aye, another and yet another, one crowd but with many a crest,
Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as glass,
Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest:
For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire,
When a great illumination surprises a festal night—
Outlining round and round Rome's dome from space to spire)
Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the pride of my soul was in sight.

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was certain, to match man's birth,

Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I;
And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach the earth,
As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to scale the sky:
Novel splendors burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt with mine,
Not a point nor peak but found and fixed its wandering star;
Meteor-moons, balls of blaze; and they did not pale nor pine,
For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more near nor far.

Nay more; for there wanted not who walked in the glare and glow,
Presences plain in the place; or, fresh from the Protoplast,
Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind should blow,
Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their liking at last;
Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through the body and gone,
But were back once more to breathe in an old world worth their new:
What never had been, was now; what was, as it shall be anon;
And what is—shall I say, matched both? for I was made perfect, too.

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish of my soul,
All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed visibly forth,
All through music and me! For think, had I painted the whole,
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonder-worth:
Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect proceeds from cause,
Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale is told;
It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list enrolled:

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are!
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star.
Consider it well: each tone of our scale in itself is naught;
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is said:
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my thought:
And there! Ye have heard and seen: consider and bow the head!

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I reared;
Gone! and the good tears start, the praises that come too slow;

For one is assured at first, one scarce can say that he feared,
That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing was to go.
Never to be again! But many more of the kind
As good, nay, better perchance: is this your comfort to me?
To me, who must be saved because I cling with my mind
To the same, same self, same love, same God: aye, what was, shall be.

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name?
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with hands!
What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power expands?
There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist

When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that He heard it once: we shall hear it by-and-by.

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fullness of the days? Have we withered or agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in but that harmony should be prized?
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe:
But God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians know.

Well, it is earth with me; silence resumes her reign:
I will be patient and proud, and soberly-acquiesce.
Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,
Sliding by semitones, till I sink to the minor—yes,
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into the deep;
Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-place is found,
The C Major of this life: so, now I will try to sleep.

RABBI BEN EZRA

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

For thence—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me;
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:

Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once, "How good to live and learn"?

Not once beat, "Praise be Thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now Love perfect too:
Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete—I trust what Thou shalt do!"

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute—gain most, as we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh today
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:

Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a god though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act tomorrow what he learns today:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made;
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age; wait death nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;

Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing and I that; whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount;

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Aye, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay—

Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops; Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee, mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,

The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst:

So, take and use Thy work:
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in Thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS; OR NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE ISLAND

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."

['Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best,
Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin.
And, while he kicks both feet in the cool slush,
And feels about his spine small eft-things course,

Run in and out each arm, and make him laugh;
And while above his head a pompion-plant,
Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,
Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard,
And now a flower drops with a bee inside,
And now a fruit to snap at, catch and crunch—
He looks out o'er yon sea which sunbeams cross
And recross till they weave a spider web
(Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks at times)
And talks to his own self, howe'er he please,
Touching that other, whom his dam called God.
Because to talk about Him, vexes—ha,
Could He but know! and time to vex is now,
When talk is safer than in wintertime.
Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep
In confidence he drudges at their task,
And it is good to cheat the pair, and gibe,
Letting the rank tongue blossom into speech.]

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!
'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match,
But not the stars; the stars came otherwise;
Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that;
Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon,
And snaky sea which rounds and ends the same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease:
He hated that He cannot change His cold,
Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy fish

That longed to 'scape the rock-stream where she lived,
And thaw herself within the lukewarm brine
O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far amid,
A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls of wave;
Only, she ever sickened, found repulse
At the other kind of water, not her life,
(Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o' the sun)
Flounced back from bliss she was not born to breathe,
And in her old bounds buried her despair,
Hating and loving warmth alike: so He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,
Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping thing.
Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech;
Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,
That floats and feeds; a certain badger brown
He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge eye
By moonlight; and the pie with the long tongue
That pricks deep into oakwarts for a worm,
And says a plain word when she finds her prize,
But will not eat the ants; the ants themselves
That build a wall of seeds and settled stalks
About their hole—He made all these and more,
Made all we see, and us, in spite: how else?
He could not, Himself, make a second self
To be His mate; as well have made Himself:
He would not make what He mislikes or slights,
An eyesore to Him, or not worth His pains:
But did, in envy, listlessness or sport,
Make what Himself would fain, in a manner, be—
Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,

Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the while,
Things He admires and mocks too—that is it.
Because, so brave, so better though they be,
It nothing skills if He begin to plague.
Look now, I melt a gourd-fruit into mash,
Add honeycomb and pods, I have perceived,
Which bite like finches when they bill and kiss—
Then, when froth rises bladdery, drink up all,
Quick, quick, till maggots scamper through my brain;
Last, throw me on my back i' the seeded thyme,
And wanton, wishing I were born a bird.
Put case, unable to be what I wish,
I yet could make a live bird out of clay:
Would not I take clay, pinch my Caliban
Able to fly?—for, there, see, he hath wings,
And great comb like the hoopoe's to admire,
And there, a sting to do his foes offense,
There, and I will that he begin to live,
Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the horns
Of grigs high up that make the merry din,
Saucy through their veined wings, and mind me not.
In which feat, if his leg snapped, brittle clay,
And he lay stupid-like—why, I should laugh;
And if he, spying me, should fall to weep,
Beseech me to be good, repair his wrong,
Bid his poor leg smart less or grow again—
Well, as the chance were, this might take or else
Not take my fancy: I might hear his cry,
And give the manikin three sound legs for one,
Or pluck the other off, leave him like an egg,
And lessoned he was mine and merely clay.

Were this no pleasure, lying in the thyme,
Drinking the mash, with brain become alive,
Making and marring clay at will? So He.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor wrong in Him,
Nor kind, nor cruel: He is strong and Lord.
'Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs
That march now from the mountain to the sea;
'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first,
Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.
'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple spots
Shall join the file, one pincer twisted off;
'Say, this bruised fellow shall receive a worm,
And two worms he whose nippers end in red;
As it likes me each time, I do: so He.

Well then, 'supposeth He is good i' the main,
Placable if His mind and ways were guessed,
But rougher than His handiwork, be sure!
Oh, He hath made things worthier than Himself,
And envieth that, so helped, such things do more
Than He who made them! What consoles but this?
That they, unless through Him, do naught at all,
And must submit: what other use in things?
'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-joint
That, blown through, gives exact the scream o' the jay
When from her wing you twitch the feathers blue:
Sound this, and little birds that hate the jay
Flock within stone's throw, glad their foe is hurt:
Put case such pipe could prattle and boast forsooth,
"I catch the birds, I am the crafty thing,

I make the cry my maker cannot make
With his great round mouth; he must blow through mine!"
Would not I smash it with my foot? So He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and ill at ease?
Aha, that is a question! Ask, for that,
What knows—the something over Setebos
That made Him, or He, may be, found and fought,
Worsted, drove off and did to nothing, perchance.
There may be something quiet o'er His head,
Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor grief,
Since both derive from weakness in some way.
I joy because the quails come; would not joy
Could I bring quails here when I have a mind:
This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.
'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its couch,
But never spends much thought nor care that way.
It may look up, work up—the worse for those
It works on! 'Careth but for Setebos
The many-handed as a cuttlefish,
Who, making Himself feared through what He does,
Looks up, first, and perceives he cannot soar
To what is quiet and hath happy life;
Next looks down here, and out of very spite
Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon real,
These good things to match those as hips do grapes.
'Tis solace making baubles, aye, and sport.
Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at his books
Careless and lofty, lord now of the isle:
Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad leaves, arrow-shaped,

Wrote thereon, he knows what, prodigious words;
Has peeled a wand and called it by a name;
Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's robe
The eyed skin of a supple oncelot;
And hath an ounce sleeker than youngling mole,
A four-legged serpent he makes cower and couch,
Now snarl, now hold its breath and mind his eye,
And saith she is Miranda and my wife:
'Keeps for his Ariel, a tall pouch-bill crane
He bids go wade for fish and straight disgorge;
Also a sea-beast, lumpish, which he snared,
Blinded the eyes of, and brought somewhat tame,
And split its toe-webs, and now pens the drudge
In a hole o' the rock and calls him Caliban;
A bitter heart that bides its time and bites.
'Plays thus at being Prosper in a way,
Taketh his mirth with make-believes: so He.

His dam held that the Quiet made all things
Which Setebos vexed only: 'holds not so.
Who made them weak, meant weakness He might vex.
Had He meant other, while His hand was in,
Why not make horny eyes no thorn could prick,
Or plate my scalp with bone against the snow,
Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint and joint,
Like an orc's armor? Aye—so spoil His sport!
He is the One now: only He doth all.

'Saith, He may like, perchance, what profits Him.
Aye, himself loves what does him good; but why?
'Gets good no otherwise. This blinded beast

Loves whoso places fleshmeat on his nose,
But, had he eyes, would want no help, but hate
Or love, just as it liked him: He hath eyes.
Also it pleaseth Setebos to work,
Use all His hands, and exercise much craft,
By no means for the love of what is worked.
'Tasteth, himself, no finer good i' the world
When all goes right, in this safe summertime,
And he wants little, hungers, aches not much,
Than trying what to do with wit and strength.
'Falls to make something: 'piled yon pile of turfs,
And squared and stuck there squares of soft white chalk,
And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a moon on each,
And set up endwise certain spikes of tree,
And crowned the whole with a sloth's skull a-top,
Found dead i' the woods, too hard for one to kill.
No use at all i' the work, for work's sole sake;
'Shall some day knock it down again: so He.

'Saith He is terrible: watch His feats in proof!
One hurricane will spoil six good months' hope.
He hath a spite against me, that I know,
Just as He favors Prosper, who knows why?
So it is, all the same, as well I find.
'Wove wattles half the winter, fenced them firm
With stone and stake to stop she-tortoises
Crawling to lay their eggs here: well, one wave,
Feeling the foot of Him upon its neck,
Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its large tongue,
And licked the whole labor flat: so much for spite.
'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder it lies)

Where, half an hour before, I slept i' the shade:
Often they scatter sparkles: there is force!
'Dug up a newt He may have envied once
And turned to stone, shut up inside a stone.
Please Him and hinder this?—What Prosper does?
Aha, if He would tell me how! Not He!
There is the sport: discover how or die!
All need not die, for of the things o' the isle
Some flee afar, some dive, some run up trees;
Those at His mercy—why, they please Him most
When . . . when . . . . well, never try the same way twice!
Repeat what act has pleased, He may grow wroth.
You must not know, His ways, and play Him off,
Sure of the issue. 'Doth the like himself:
'Spareth a squirrel that it nothing fears
But steals the nut from underneath my thumb,
And when I threat, bites stoutly in defense:
'Spareth an urchin that contrariwise,
Curls up into a ball, pretending death
For fright at my approach: the two ways please.
But what would move my choler more than this,
That either creature counted on its life
Tomorrow and next day and all days to come,
Saying, forsooth, in the inmost of its heart,
"Because he did so yesterday with me,
And otherwise with such another brute,
So must he do henceforth and always."—Aye?
Would teach the reasoning couple what "must" means!
'Doth as he likes, or wherefore Lord? So He.

'Conceiveth all things will continue thus,
And we shall have to live in fear of Him
So long as He lives, keeps His strength: no change,
If He have done His best, make no new world
To please Him more, so leave off watching this—
If He surprise not even the Quiet's self
Some strange day—or, suppose, grow into it
As grubs grow butterflies: else, here are we,
And there is He, and nowhere help at all.

'Believeth with the life, the pain shall stop.
His dam held different, that after death
He both plagued enemies and feasted friends:
Idly! He doth His worst in this our life,
Giving just respite lest we die through pain,
Saving last pain for worst—with which, an end.
Meanwhile, the best way to escape His ire
Is not to seem too happy. 'Sees, himself,
Yonder two flies, with purple films and pink,
Bask on the pompion-bell above: kills both.
'Sees two black painful beetles roll their ball
On head and tail as if to save their lives:
Moves them the stick away they strive to clear.

Even so, 'would have Him misconceive, suppose
This Caliban strives hard and ails no less,
And always, above all else, envies Him;
Wherefore he mainly dances on dark nights,
Moans in the sun, gets under holes to laugh,
And never speaks his mind save housed as now:
Outside, 'groans, curses. If He caught me here,

O'erheard this speech, and asked, "What chucklest at?"
'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger off,
Or of my three kid yearlings burn the best,
Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree,
Or push my tame beast for the orc to taste:
While myself lit a fire, and made a song
And sung it, *"What I hate, be consecrate*
To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate
For Thee; what see for envy in poor me?"
Hoping the while, since evils sometimes mend,
Warts rub away, and sores are cured with slime,
That some strange day, will either the Quiet catch
And conquer Setebos, or likelier He
Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as die.

[What, what? A curtain o'er the world at once!
Crickets stop hissing; not a bird—or, yes,
There scuds His raven that has told Him all!
It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha! The wind
Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house o' the move,
And fast invading fires begin! White blaze—
A tree's head snaps—and there, there, there, there, there,
His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at Him!
Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!
'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper lip,
Will let those quails fly, will not eat this month
One little mess of whelks, so he may 'scape!]

MAY AND DEATH

I wish that when you died last May,
Charles, there had died along with you
Three parts of spring's delightful things;
Aye, and, for me, the fourth part, too.

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps!
There must be many a pair of friends
Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm
Moon-births and the long evening-ends.

So, for their sake, be May still May!
Let their new time, as mine of old,
Do all it did for me: I bid
Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold.

Only, one little sight, one plant,
Woods have in May, that starts up green
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
Is spring's blood, spilt its leaves between—

That, they might spare; a certain wood
Might miss the plant; their loss were small:
But I—whene'er the leaf grows there,
Its drop comes from my heart, that's all.

PROSPICE

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go;
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness, and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

A FACE

If one could have that little head of hers
Painted upon a background of pale gold,
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!
No shade encroaching on the matchless mold
Of those two lips, which should be opening soft
In the pure profile; not as when she laughs,
For that spoils all; but rather as if aloft
Yon hyacinth, she loves so, leaned its staff's
Burthen of honey-colored buds to kiss
And capture 'twixt the lips apart for this.
Then her lithe neck, three fingers might surround,
How it should waver on the pale gold ground
Up to the fruit-shaped, perfect chin it lifts!
I know, Correggio loves to mass, in rifts
Of heaven, his angel faces, orb on orb
Breaking its outline, burning shades absorb;
But these are only massed there, I should think,
Waiting to see some wonder momently
Grow out, stand full, fade slow against the sky
(That's the pale ground you'd see this sweet face by),
All heaven, meanwhile, condensed into one eye
Which fears to lose the wonder, should it wink.

O LYRIC LOVE

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire—
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face—
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—
When the first summons from the darkling earth
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their blue,
And bared them of the glory—to drop down,
To toil for man, to suffer or to die—
This is the same voice; can thy soul know change?
Hail then, and hearken from the realms of help!
Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand—
That still, despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendor once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile:
—Never conclude, but raising hand and head
Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,
Their utmost up and on—so blessing back
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud,
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall!

PROLOGUE TO PACCHIAROTTO

Oh, the old wall here! How I could pass
  Life in a long midsummer day,
My feet confined to a plot of grass,
  My eyes from a wall not once away!

And lush and lithe do the creepers clothe
  Yon wall I watch, with a wealth of green:
Its bald red bricks draped, nothing loth,
  In lappets of tangle they laugh between.

Now, what is it makes pulsate the robe?
  Why tremble the sprays? What life o'erbrims
The body—the house, no eye can probe—
  Divined as, beneath a robe, the limbs?

And there again! But my heart may guess
  Who tripped behind; and she sang perhaps;
So, the old wall throbbed, and its life's excess
  Died out and away in the leafy wraps!

Wall upon wall are between us; life
  And song should away from heart to heart!
I—prison-bird, with a ruddy strife
  At breast, and a lip whence storm-notes start—

Hold on, hope hard in the subtle thing
That's spirit: though cloistered fast, soar free;
Account as wood, brick, stone, this ring
Of the rueful neighbors, and—forth to thee!

HOUSE

Shall I sonnet-sing you about myself?
Do I live in a house you would like to see?
Is it scant of gear, has it store of pelf?
"Unlock my heart with a sonnet-key"?

Invite the world, as my betters have done?
"Take notice: this building remains on view,
Its suites of reception every one,
Its private apartment and bedroom too;

"For a ticket, apply to the Publisher."
No: thanking the public, I must decline.
A peep through my window, if folk prefer;
But, please you, no foot over threshold of mine!

I have mixed with a crowd and heard free talk
In a foreign land where an earthquake chanced
And a house stood gaping, naught to balk
Man's eye wherever he gazed or glanced.

The whole of the frontage shaven sheer,
The inside gaped; exposed to day,

Right and wrong and common and queer,
Bare, as the palm of your hand, it lay.

The owner? Oh, he had been crushed, no doubt!
"Odd tables and chairs for a man of wealth!
What a parcel of musty old books about!
He smoked—no wonder he lost his health!

"I doubt if he bathed before he dressed.
A brasier?—the pagan, he burned perfumes!
You see it is proved, what the neighbors guessed:
His wife and himself had separate rooms."

Friends, the goodman of the house at least
Kept house to himself till an earthquake came;
'Tis the fall of its frontage permits you feast
On the inside arrangement you praise or blame.

Outside should suffice for evidence;
And whoso desires to penetrate
Deeper, must dive by the spirit-sense—
No optics like yours, at any rate!

"Hoity-toity! A street to explore,
Your house the exception! *'With this same key*
Shakespeare unlocked his heart,' once more!"
Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he!

SHOP

So, friend, your shop was all your house!
Its front, astonishing the street,
Invited view from man and mouse
To what diversity of treat
Behind its glass—the single sheet!

What gimcracks, genuine Japanese:
Gape-jaw and goggle-eye, the frog;
Dragons, owls, monkeys, beetles, geese;
Some crush-nosed human-hearted dog:
Queer names, too, such a catalogue!

I thought, "And he who owns the wealth
Which blocks the window's vastitude,
—Ah, could I peep at him by stealth
Behind his ware, pass shop, intrude
On house itself, what scenes were viewed!

"If wide and showy thus the shop,
What must the habitation prove?
The true house with no name a-top—
The mansion, distant one remove,
Once get him off his traffic-groove!

"Pictures he likes, or books perhaps;
And as for buying most and best,
Commend me to these City chaps!
Or else he's social, takes his rest
On Sundays, with a lord for guest.

"Some suburb-palace, parked about
  And gated grandly, built last year;
The four-mile walk to keep off gout;
  Or big seat sold by bankrupt peer—
  But then he takes the rail, that's clear.

"Or, stop! I wager, taste selects
  Some out o' the way, some all-unknown
Retreat; the neighborhood suspects
  Little that he who rambles lone
  Makes Rothschild tremble on his throne!"

Nowise! Nor Mayfair residence
  Fit to receive and entertain—
Nor Hampstead villa's kind defense
  From noise and crowd, from dust and drain—
  Nor country-box was soul's domain!

Nowise! At back of all that spread
  Of merchandise, woe's me, I find
A hole i' the wall where, heels by head,
  The owner couched, his ware behind
  —In cupboard suited to his mind.

For why? He saw no use of life
  But, while he drove a roaring trade,
To chuckle, "Customers are rife!"
  To chafe, "So much hard cash outlaid
  Yet zero in my profits made!

"This novelty costs pains, but—takes?
Cumbers my counter! Stock no more!
This article, no such great shakes,
Fizzes like wildfire? Underscore
The cheap thing—thousands to the fore!"

'Twas lodging best to live most nigh
(Cramp, coffinlike as crib might be)
Receipt of Custom; ear and eye
Wanted no outworld: "Hear and see
The bustle in the shop!" quoth he

My fancy of a merchant-prince
Was different. Through his wares we groped
Our darkling way to—not to mince
The matter—no black den where moped
The master if we interloped!

Shop was shop only: household-stuff?
What did he want with comforts there?
"Walls, ceiling, floor, stay blank and rough,
So goods on sale show rich and rare!
'Sell and scud home' be shop's affair!"

What might he deal in? Gems, suppose!
Since somehow business must be done
At cost of trouble—see, he throws
You choice of jewels, everyone,
Good, better, best, star, moon, and sun!

Which lies within your power of purse?
  This ruby that would tip aright
Solomon's scepter? Oh, your nurse
  Wants simply coral, the delight
  Of teething baby—stuff to bite!

Howe'er your choice fell, straight you took
  Your purchase, prompt your money rang
On counter—scarce the man forsook
  His study of the "Times," just swang
  Till-ward his hand that stopped the clang—

Then off made buyer with a prize,
  Then seller to his "Times" returned;
And so did day wear, wear, till eyes
  Brightened apace, for rest was earned;
  He locked door long ere candle burned.

And whither went he? Ask himself,
  Not me! To change of scene, I think.
Once sold the ware and pursed the pelf,
  Chaffer was scarce his meat and drink,
  Nor all his music—money-chink.

Because a man has shop to mind
  In time and place, since flesh must live,
Needs spirit lack all life behind,
  All stray thoughts, fancies fugitive,
  All loves except what trade can give?

I want to know a butcher paints,
A baker rhymes for his pursuit,
Candlestick-maker much acquaints
His soul with song, or, haply mute,
Blows out his brains upon the flute!

But—shop each day and all day long!
Friend, your good angel slept, your star
Suffered eclipse, fate did you wrong!
From where these sorts of treasures are,
There should our hearts be—Christ, how far!

HERVÉ RIEL

I

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French—woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to Saint Malo on the Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

II

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfreville;

Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signaled to the place,
"Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbor, take us quick—or, quicker still,
Here's the English can and will!"

III

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board;
"Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?" laughed they;
"Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and scored,
Shall the *Formidable* here, with her twelve and eighty guns,
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter—where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,
And with flow at full beside?
Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!"

IV

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
"Here's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow

All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?
Better run the ships aground!"
(Ended Damfreville his speech).
"Not a minute more to wait!
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

V

"Give the word!" But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
—A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

VI

And "What mockery or malice have we here?" cries Hervé Riel;
"Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell

On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every smell
'Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river disembogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor..
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this *Formidable* clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,
Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound;
And if one ship misbehave
—Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why, I've nothing but my life—here's my head!" cries Hervé Riel.

VII

Not a minute more to wait.
"Steer us in, then, small and great!
Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried its chief.

Captains, give the sailor place!
He is Admiral, in brief.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's profound!
See, safe through shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock;
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,
Not a spar that comes to grief!
The peril, see, is past.
All are harbored to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas, "Anchor!"—sure as fate
Up the English come—too late!

VIII

So, the storm subsides to calm:
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanched with balm.
"Just our rapture to enhance;
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth, and glare askance
As they cannonade away!
'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!"
How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance!

Out burst all with one accord,
"This is Paradise for Hell!
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing!"
What a shout, and all one word, "Hervé Riel!"
As he stepped in front once more,
Not a symptom of surprise
In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

IX

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips;
You have saved the King his ships,
You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse!
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's not Damfreville."

X

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue:

"Since I needs must say my say,
Since on board the duty's done,
And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but a run?—
Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
Since the others go ashore—
Come! A good whole holiday!
Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore!"
That he asked and that he got—nothing more.

XI

Name and deed alike are lost.
Not a pillar nor a post
In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack
All that France saved from the fight whence England bore the bell.
Go to Paris: rank on rank
Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank!
You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honor France, love thy wife, the Belle Aurore!

"GOOD, TO FORGIVE"

Good, to forgive;
  Best, to forget!
  Living, we fret;
Dying, we live.
Fretless and free,
  Soul, clap thy pinion!
  Earth have dominion,
Body, o'er thee!

Wander at will,
  Day after day—
  Wander away,
Wandering still—
Soul that canst soar!
  Body may slumber:
  Body shall cumber
Soul-flight no more.

Waft of soul's wing!
  What lies above?
  Sunshine and Love,
Skyblue and Spring!
Body hides—where?
  Ferns of all feather,
  Mosses and heather,
Yours be the care!

"SUCH A STARVED BANK OF MOSS"

Such a starved bank of moss
  Till, that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
  Violets were born!

Sky—what a scowl of cloud
  Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud:
  Splendid, a star!

World—how it walled about
  Life with disgrace
Till God's own smile came out:
  That was thy face!

EPILOGUE TO THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC

What a pretty tale you told me
  Once upon a time
—Said you found it somewhere (scold me!)
  Was it prose or was it rhyme,
Greek or Latin? Greek, you said,
While your shoulder propped my head.

Anyhow there's no forgetting
This much if no more,
That a poet (pray, no petting!)
Yes, a bard, sir, famed of yore,
Went where suchlike used to go,
Singing for a prize, you know.

Well, he had to sing, nor merely
Sing but play the lyre;
Playing was important clearly
Quite as singing—I desire,
Sir, you keep the fact in mind
For a purpose that's behind.

There stood he, while deep attention
Held the judges round,
—Judges able, I should mention,
To detect the slightest sound
Sung or played amiss—such ears
Had old judges, it appears!

None the less he sang out boldly,
Played in time and tune,
Till the judges, weighing coldly
Each note's worth, seemed, late or soon,
Sure to smile, "In vain one tries
Picking faults out; take the prize!"

When, a mischief! Were they seven
Strings the lyre possessed?
Oh, and afterwards eleven,

Thank you! Well, sir—who had guessed
Such ill luck in store?—it happed
One of those same seven strings snapped.

All was lost, then! No! a cricket
(What "cicada"? Pooh!)
—Some mad thing that left its thicket
For mere love of music—flew
With its little heart on fire,
Lighted on the crippled lyre.

So that when (ah, joy!) our singer
For his truant string
Feels with disconcerted finger,
What does cricket else but fling
Fiery heart forth, sound the note
Wanted by the throbbing throat?

Aye and, ever to the ending,
Cricket chirps at need,
Executes the hand's intending,
Promptly, perfectly—indeed
Saves the singer from defeat
With her chirrup low and sweet.

Till, at ending, all the judges
Cry with one assent,
"Take the prize—a prize who grudges
Such a voice and instrument?
Why, we took your lyre for harp,
So it shrilled us forth F sharp!"

Did the conqueror spurn the creature,
Once its service done?
That's no such uncommon feature
In the case when Music's son
Finds his Lotte's power too spent
For aiding soul-development.

No! This other, on returning
Homeward, prize in hand,
Satisfied his bosom's yearning
(Sir, I hope you understand!)
—Said, "Some record there must be
Of this cricket's help to me!"

So, he made himself a statue:
Marble stood, life-size;
On the lyre he pointed at you
Perched his partner in the prize;
Never more apart you found
Her, he throned, from him, she crowned.

That's the tale—its application?
Somebody I know
Hopes one day for reputation
Through his poetry that's—oh,
All so learned and so wise
And deserving of a prize!

If he gains one, will some ticket,
When his statue's built,
Tell the gazer, "'Twas a cricket

Helped my crippled lyre, whose lilt
Sweet and low, when strength usurped
Softness' place i' the scale, she chirped:

"For as victory was nighest,
While I sang and played-
With my lyre at lowest, highest,
Right alike—one string that made
'Love' sound soft was snapped in twain,
Never to be heard again—

"Had not a kind cricket fluttered,
Perched upon the place
Vacant left, and duly uttered,
'Love, Love, Love,' whene'er the bass
Asked the treble to atone
For its somewhat somber drone."

But you don't know music! Wherefore
Keep on casting pearls
To a—poet? All I care for
Is—to tell him that a girl's
"Love" comes aptly in when gruff
Grows his singing. (There, enough!)

PHEIDIPPIDES

Χαίρετε, νικῶμεν.

First I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock!
Gods of my birthplace, dæmons and heroes, honor to all!
Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, coequal in praise
—Aye, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the ægis and spear!
Also ye of the bow and the buskin, praised be your peer,
Now, henceforth and forever—O latest to whom I upraise
Hand and heart and voice! For Athens, leave pasture and flock!
Present to help, potent to save, Pan—patron I call!

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see, I return!
See, 'tis myself here standing alive, no specter that speaks!
Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me, Athens and you,
"Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid!
Persia has come, we are here, where is She?" Your command I obeyed,
Ran and raced; like stubble, some field which a fire runs through,
Was the space between city and city. Two days, two nights did I burn
Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke; breath served but for "Persia has come!
Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute, water and earth;
Razed to the ground is Eretria—but Athens, shall Athens sink,
Drop into dust and die—the flower of Hellas utterly die,
Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid, the stander-by?
Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch o'er destruction's brink?
How—when? No care for my limbs!—there's lightning in all and some—
Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it birth!"

O my Athens—Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond?
Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,
Malice—each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified hate!
Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses. I stood
Quivering—the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an inch from dry wood—
"Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they debate?
Thunder, thou Zeus! Athené, are Spartans a quarry beyond
Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang them 'Ye must'!"
No bolt launched from Olumpos! Lo, their answer at last!

"Has Persia come—does Athens ask aid—may Sparta befriend?
Nowise precipitate judgment—too weighty the issue at stake!
Count we no time lost time which lags through respect to the gods!
Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare, whatever the odds
In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take
Full circle her state in the sky!' Already she rounds to it fast:
Athens must wait, patient as we—who judgment suspend."

Athens—except for that sparkle—thy name, I had moldered to ash!
That sent a blaze through my blood; off, off and away was I back,
—Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false and the vile!
Yet "O gods of my land!" I cried, as each hillock and plain,
Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them again,
"Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we paid you erewhile?
Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome libation! Too rash
Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!

"Oak and olive and bay—I bid you cease to enwreathe
Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian's foot,
You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn a slave!
Rather I hail thee, Parnes—trust to thy wild waste tract!
Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What matter if slacked
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave
No deity deigns to drape with verdure? At least I can breathe,
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute!"

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge;
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a bar
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.
Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure across:
"Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night in the fosse?
Athens to aid? Though the dive were through Erebos, thus I obey—
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise! No bridge
Better!"—when—ha! what was it I came on, of wonders that are?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he—majestical Pan!
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his hoof;

All the great god was good in the eyes grave-kindly—
the curl
Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's awe,
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I saw.
"Halt, Pheidippides!"—halt I did, my brain of a whirl.
"Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?" he gracious
began;
"How is it—Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof?

"Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no feast!
Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more help-
ful of old?
Aye, and still, and forever her friend! Test Pan, trust
me!
Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have
faith
In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens, 'The
Goat-God saith:
When Persia—so much as strews not the soil—is cast in
the sea,
Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your
most and least,
Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the
free and the bold!'

"Say Pan saith: 'Let this, foreshowing the place, be
the pledge!' "
(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear
—Fennel—I grasped it a-tremble with dew—what-
ever it bode)

"While, as for thee" . . . But enough! He was gone.
If I ran hitherto—
Be sure that, the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but flew.
Parnes to Athens—earth no more, the air was my road;
Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor's edge!
Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon rare!

Then spoke Miltiades. "And thee, best runner of Greece,
Whose limbs did duty indeed—what gift is promised thyself?
Tell it us straightway—Athens the mother demands of her son!"
Rosily blushed the youth; he paused; but, lifting at length
His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength
Into the utterance—"Pan spoke thus: 'For what thou hast done
Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee release
From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf!'

"I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind!
Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may grow—
Pound—Pan helping us—Persia to dust, and, under the deep,

Whelm her away forever; and then—no Athens to save—
Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave—
Hie to my house and home; and, when my children shall creep
Close to my knees—recount how the God was awful yet kind,
Promised their sire reward to the full—rewarding him —so!"

Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day;
So, when Persia was dust, all cried, "To Akropolis!
Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!
'Athens is saved, thank Pan,' go shout!" He flung down his shield,
Ran like fire once more; and the space 'twixt the Fennel-field
And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through,
Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we conquer!" Like wine through clay,
Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died—the bliss!

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute
Is still "Rejoice!"—his word which brought rejoicing indeed.
So is Pheidippides happy forever—the noble strong man
Who could race like a god, bear the face of a god, whom a god loved so well;
He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell

Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,
So to end gloriously—once to shout, thereafter be mute:
"Athens is saved!"—Pheidippides dies in the shout for his meed.

MULÉYKEH

If a stranger passed the tent of Hóseyn, he cried, "A churl's!"
Or haply, "God help the man who has neither salt nor bread!"
—"Nay," would a friend exclaim, "he needs nor pity nor scorn
More than who spends small thought on the shore-sand, picking pearls,
—Holds but in light esteem the seed-sort, bears instead
On his breast a moon-like prize, some orb which of night makes morn.

"What if no flocks and herds enrich the son of Sinán?
They went when his tribe was mulct, ten thousand camels the due,
Blood-value paid perforce for a murder done of old.
'God gave them, let them go! But never since time began,
Muléykeh, peerless mare, owned master the match of you,
And you are my prize, my Pearl; I laugh at men's land and gold!'

"So in the pride of his soul laughs Hóseyn—and right,
I say.
Do the ten steeds run a race of glory? Outstripping all,
Ever Muléykeh stands first steed at the victor's staff.
Who started, the owner's hope, gets shamed and named,
that day.
'Silence,' or, last but one, is 'The Cuffed,' as we use to
call
Whom the paddock's lord thrusts forth. Right, Hóseyn,
I say, to laugh!"

"Boasts he Muléykeh the Pearl?" the stranger replies:
"Be sure
On him I waste nor scorn nor pity, but lavish both
On Duhl the son of Sheybán, who withers away in heart
For envy of Hóseyn's luck. Such sickness admits no
cure.
A certain poet has sung, and sealed the same with an
oath,
'For the vulgar—flocks and herds! The Pearl is a prize
apart.'"

Lo, Duhl the son of Sheybán comes riding to Hóseyn's
tent,
And he casts his saddle down, and enters and "Peace!"
bids he.
"You are poor, I know the cause: my plenty shall mend
the wrong.
'Tis said of your Pearl—the price of a hundred camels
spent

In her purchase were scarce ill paid; such prudence is far from me
Who proffer a thousand. Speak! Long parley may last too long."

Said Hóseyn, "You feed young beasts a many, of famous breed,
Slit-eared, unblemished, fat, true offspring of Múzennem:
There stumbles no weak-eyed she in the line as it climbs the hill.
But I love Muléykeh's face; her forefront whitens indeed
Like a yellowish wave's cream-crest. Your camels—go gaze on them!
Her fetlock is foam-splashed too. Myself am the richer still."

A year goes by; lo, back to the tent again rides Duhl.
"You are open-hearted, aye—moist-handed, a very prince.
Why should I speak of sale? Be the mare your simple gift!
My son is pined to death for her beauty; my wife prompts, 'Fool,
Beg for his sake the Pearl! Be God the rewarder, since
God pays debts seven for one; who squanders on Him shows thrift.'"

Said Hóseyn, "God gives each man one life, like a lamp, then gives
That lamp due measure of oil; lamp lighted—hold high, wave wide

Its comfort for others to share! once quench it, what help is left?
The oil of your lamp is your son, I shine while Muléykeh lives.
Would I beg your son to cheer my dark if Muléykeh died?
It is life against life—what good avails to the life-bereft?"

Another year, and—hist! What craft is it Duhl designs?
He alights not at the door of the tent as he did last time,
But, creeping behind, he gropes his stealthy way by the trench
Half-round till he finds the flap in the folding, for night combines
With the robber—and such is he: Duhl, covetous up to crime,
Must wring from Hóseyn's grasp the Pearl, by whatever the wrench.

"He was hunger-bitten, I heard; I tempted with half my store,
And a gibe was all my thanks. Is he generous like Spring dew?
Account the fault to me who chaffered with such an one!
He has killed, to feast chance comers, the creature he rode; nay, more—
For a couple of singing-girls his robe has he torn in two—
I will beg! Yet I nowise gained by the tale of my wife and son.

"I swear by the Holy House, my head will I never wash
Till I filch his Pearl away. Fair dealing I tried, then guile,

And now I resort to force. He said we must live or die;
Let him die, then—let me live! Be bold—but not too rash!
I have found me a peeping-place; breast, bury your breathing while
I explore for myself! Now, breathe! He deceived me not, the spy!

"As he said—there lies in peace Hóseyn—how happy! Beside
Stands tethered the Pearl; thrice winds her headstall about his wrist;
'Tis therefore he sleeps so sound—the moon through the roof reveals.
And, loose on his left, stands too that other, known far and wide,
Buhéyseh, her sister born; fleet is she yet ever missed
The winning tail's fire-flash a-stream past the thunderous heels.

"No less she stands saddled and bridled, this second, in case some thief
Should enter and seize and fly with the first, as I mean to do.
What then? The Pearl is the Pearl—once mount her we both escape."
Through the skirt-fold in glides Duhl—so a serpent disturbs no leaf
In a bush as he parts the twigs entwining a nest; clean through,
He is noiselessly at his work; as he planned, he performs the rape.

He has set the tent-door wide, has buckled the girth, has clipped
The headstall away from the wrist he leaves thrice bound as before,
He springs on the Pearl, is launched on the desert like bolt from bow.
Up starts our plundered man; from his breast though the heart be ripped,
Yet his mind has the mastery. Behold, in a minute more,
He is out and off and away on Buhéyseh, whose worth we know!

And Hóseyn—his blood turns flame, he has learned long since to ride,
And Buhéyseh does her part—they gain—they are gaining fast
On the fugitive pair, and Duhl has Eá-Dárraj to cross and quit,
And to reach the ridge El-Sabán—no safety till that be spied!
And Buhéyseh is, bound by bound, but a horse-length off at last,
For the Pearl has missed the tap of the heel, the touch of the bit.

She shortens her stride, she chafes at her rider the strange and queer:
Buhéyseh is mad with hope—beat sister she shall and must,
Though Duhl, of the hand and heel so clumsy, she has to thank.

She is near now, nose by tail—they are neck by croup—joy! fear!
What folly makes Hóseyn shout, "Dog Duhl, Damned son of the Dust,
Touch the right ear and press with your foot my Pearl's left flank!"

And Duhl was wise at the word, and Muléykeh as prompt perceived
Who was urging redoubled pace, and to hear him was to obey,
And a leap indeed gave she, and evanished for evermore.
And Hóseyn looked one long last look as who, all bereaved,
Looks, fain to follow the dead so far as the living may;
Then he turned Buhéyseh's neck slow homeward, weeping sore.

And, lo, in the sunrise, still sat Hóseyn upon the ground
Weeping; and neighbors came, the tribesmen of Bénu-Asád
In the vale of green Er-Rass, and they questioned him of his grief;
And he told from first to last how, serpent-like, Duhl had wound
His way to the nest, and how Duhl rode like an ape, so bad!
And how Buhéyseh did wonders, yet Pearl remained with the thief.

And they jeered him, one and all: "Poor Hóseyn is crazed past hope!

How else had he wrought himself his ruin, in fortune's spite?
To have simply held the tongue were a task for boy or girl,
And here were Muléykeh again, the eyed like an antelope,
The child of his heart by day, the wife of his breast by night!"—
"And the beaten in speed!" wept Hóseyn. "You never have loved my Pearl."

WANTING IS—WHAT?

Wanting is—what?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant,
—Where is the blot?
Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same
—Framework which waits for a picture to frame;
What of the leafage, what of the flower?
Roses embowering with naught they embower!
Come then, complete incompletion, O comer,
Pant through the blueness, perfect the summer!
Breathe but one breath
Rose-beauty above,
And all that was death
Grows life, grows love,
Grows love!

NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE

Never the time and the place
And the loved one all together!
This path—how soft to pace!
This May—what magic weather!
Where is the loved one's face?
In a dream that loved one's face meets mine,
But the house is narrow, the place is bleak
Where, outside, rain and wind combine
With a furtive ear, if I strive to speak,
With a hostile eye at my flushing cheek,
With a malice that marks each word, each sign!
O enemy sly and serpentine,
Uncoil thee from the waking man!
Do I hold the Past
Thus firm and fast
Yet doubt if the Future hold I can?
This path so soft to pace shall lead
Through the magic of May to herself indeed!
Or narrow if needs the house must be,
Outside are the storms and strangers; we—
Oh, close, safe, warm sleep I and she
—I and she!

THE PATRIOT

It was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad;
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels—
But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered, "And afterward, what else?"

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep!
Naught man could do, have I left undone;
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

There's nobody on the housetops now—
Just a palsied few at the windows set;
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
"Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
Me?"—God might question; now instead,
'Tis God shall repay; I am safer so.

INSTANS TYRANNUS

I

Of the million or two, more or less,
I rule and possess,
One man, for some cause undefined,
Was least to my mind.

II

I struck him; he groveled, of course—
For what was his force?
I pinned him to earth with my weight
And persistence of hate;
And he lay, would not moan, would not curse,
As his lot might be worse.

III

"Were the object less mean, would he stand
At the swing of my hand!
For obscurity helps him and blots
The hole where he squats."

So I set my five wits on the stretch
To inveigle the wretch.
All in vain! Gold and jewels I threw;
Still he couched there perdue;
I tempted his blood and his flesh,
Hid in roses my mesh,
Choicest cates and the flagon's best spilth:
Still he kept to his filth.

IV

Had he kith now or kin, were access
To his heart, did I press;
Just a son or a mother to seize!
No such booty as these.
Were it simply a friend to pursue
'Mid my million or two,
Who could pay me in person or pelf
What he owes me himself!
No; I could not but smile through my chafe;
For the fellow lay safe
As his mates do, the midge and the nit
—Through minuteness, to wit.

V

Then a humor more great took its place
At the thought of his face,
The droop, the low cares of the mouth,
The trouble uncouth

'Twixt the brows, all that air one is fain
To put out of its pain.
And, "no!" I admonished myself,
"Is one mocked by an elf,
Is one baffled by toad or by rat?
The gravamen's in that!
How the lion, who crouches to suit
His back to my foot,
Would admire that I stand in debate!
But the small turns the great
If it vexes you—that is the thing!
Toad or rat vex the king?
Though I waste half my realm to unearth
Toad or rat, 'tis well worth!"

VI

So I soberly laid my last plan
To extinguish the man.
Round his creep-hole, with never a break,
Ran my fires for his sake;
Overhead, did my thunder combine
With my underground mine:
Till I looked from my labor content
To enjoy the event.

VII

When sudden . . . how think ye, the end?
Did I say "without friend"?

Say, rather, from marge to blue marge
The whole sky grew his targe
With the sun's self for visible boss,
While an Arm ran across
Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
Where the wretch was safe pressed!
Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
The man sprang to his feet,
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!
—So, *I* was afraid!

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

That second time they hunted me
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
And Austria, hounding far and wide
Her bloodhounds through the countryside,
Breathed hot and instant on my trace—
I made six days a hiding-place
Of that dry green old aqueduct
Where I and Charles, when boys, have plucked
The fireflies from the roof above,
Bright creeping through the moss they love:
—How long it seems since Charles was lost!
Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed
The country in my very sight;
And when that peril ceased at night,
The sky broke out in red dismay

With signal fires; well, there I lay
Close covered o'er in my recess,
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
Thinking of Metternich our friend,
And Charles's miserable end,
And much beside, two days; the third,
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
The peasants from the village go
To work among the maize; you know,
With us in Lombardy, they bring
Provisions packed on mules, a string
With little bells that cheer their task,
And casks, and boughs on every cask
To keep the sun's heat from the wine;
These I let pass in jingling line,
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
The peasants from the village, too;
For at the very rear would troop
Their wives and sisters in a group
To help, I knew. When these had passed,
I threw my glove to strike the last,
Taking the chance; she did not start,
Much less cry out, but stooped apart,
One instant rapidly glanced round,
And saw me beckon from the ground;
A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;
She picked my glove up while she stripped
A branch off, then rejoined the rest
With that; my glove lay in her breast.
Then I drew breath; they disappeared;
It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
Exactly where my glove was thrown.
Meanwhile came many thoughts; on me
Rested the hopes of Italy;
I had devised a certain tale
Which, when 'twas told her, could not fail
Persuade a peasant of its truth;
I meant to call a freak of youth
This hiding, and give hopes of pay,
And no temptation to betray.
But when I saw that woman's face,
Its calm simplicity of grace,
Our Italy's own attitude
In which she walked thus far, and stood,
Planting each naked foot so firm,
To crush the snake and spare the worm—
At first sight of her eyes, I said,
"I am that man upon whose head
They fix the price, because I hate
The Austrians over us; the State
Will give you gold—oh, gold so much!—
If you betray me to their clutch,
And be your death, for aught I know,
If once they find you saved their foe.
Now you must bring me food and drink,
And also paper, pen, and ink,
And carry safe what I shall write
To Padua, which you'll reach at night
Before the duomo shuts; go in,
And wait till Tenebræ begin;
Walk to the third confessional,

Between the pillar and the wall,
And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace?*
Say it a second time, then cease;
And if the voice inside returns,
From Christ and Freedom; what concerns
The cause of Peace?—for answer, slip
My letter where you placed your lip;
Then come back happy we have done
Our mother service—I, the son,
As you the daughter of our land!"

Three mornings more, she took her stand
In the same place, with the same eyes;
I was no surer of sunrise
Than of her coming. We conferred
Of her own prospects, and I heard
She had a lover—stout and tall,
She said—then let her eyelids fall,
"He could do much"—as if some doubt
Entered her heart—then, passing out,
"She could not speak for others, who
Had other thoughts; herself she knew";
And so she brought me drink and food.
After four days the scouts pursued
Another path; at last arrived
The help my Paduan friends contrived
To furnish me; she brought the news.
For the first time I could not choose
But kiss her hand, and lay my own
Upon her head—"This faith was shown
To Italy, our mother; she

Uses my hand and blesses thee."
She followed down to the seashore;
I left and never saw her more.

How very long since I have thought
Concerning—much less wished for—aught
Beside the good of Italy,
For which I live and mean to die!
I never was in love; and since
Charles proved false, what shall now convince
My inmost heart I have a friend?
However, if I pleased to spend
Real wishes on myself—say, three—
I know at least what one should be.
I would grasp Metternich until
I felt his red wet throat distill
In blood through these two hands. And next
—Nor much for that am I perplexed—
Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,
Should die slow of a broken heart
Under his new employers. Last
—Ah, there, what should I wish? For fast
Do I grow old and out of strength.
If I resolved to seek at length
My father's house again, how scared
They all would look, and unprepared!
My brothers live in Austria's pay
—Disowned me long ago, men say;
And all my early mates who used
To praise me so—perhaps induced
More than one early step of mine—

Are turning wise; while some opine,
"Freedom grows license," some suspect,
"Haste breeds delay," and recollect
They always said, such premature
Beginnings never could endure!
So, with a sullen "All's for best,"
The land seems settling to its rest.
I think then, I should wish to stand
This evening in that dear, lost land,
Over the sea the thousand miles,
And know if yet that woman smiles
With the calm smile; some little farm
She lives in there, no doubt; what harm
If I sat on the door-side bench,
And, while her spindle made a trench
Fantastically in the dust,
Inquired of all her fortunes—just
Her children's ages and their names,
And what may be the husband's aims
For each of them. I'd talk this out,
And sit there, for an hour about,
Then kiss her hand once more, and lay
Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing—how
It steals the time! To business now.

"ROUND US THE WILD CREATURES"

Round us the wild creatures, overhead the trees,
Underfoot the moss-tracks—life and love with these!
I to wear a fawn-skin, thou to dress in flowers;
All the long lone summer day, that greenwood life of ours!

Rich-pavilioned, rather—still the world without—
Inside—gold-roofed, silk-walled silence round about!
Queen it thou on purple—I, at watch and ward,
Couched beneath the columns, gaze, thy slave, love's guard!

So, for us no world? Let throngs press thee to me!
Up and down amid men, heart by heart fare we!
Welcome squalid vesture, harsh voice, hateful face!
God is soul, souls I and thou; with souls should souls have place.

PROLOGUE TO ASOLANDO

"The Poet's age is sad: for why?
In youth, the natural world could show
No common object but his eye
At once involved with alien glow—
His own soul's iris-bow.

"And now a flower is just a flower;
Man, bird, beast are but beast, bird, man—

Simply themselves, uncinct by dower
Of dyes which, when life's day began,
Round each in glory ran."

Friend, did you need an optic glass,
Which were your choice? A lens to drape
In ruby, emerald, chrysopras,
Each object—or reveal its shape
Clear outlined, past escape,

The naked very thing?—so clear
That, when you had the chance to gaze,
You found its inmost self appear
Through outer seeming—truth ablaze,
Not falsehood's fancy-haze?

How many a year, my Asolo,
Since—one step just from sea to land—
I found you, loved yet feared you so—
For natural objects seemed to stand
Palpably fire-clothed! No—

No mastery of mine o'er these!
Terror with beauty, like the Bush
Burning but unconsumed. Bend knees,
Drop eyes to earthward! Language? Tush!
Silence 'tis awe decrees.

And now? The lambent flame is—where?
Lost from the naked world; earth, sky,
Hill, vale, tree, flower—Italia's rare

O'errunning beauty crowds the eye—
But flame? The Bush is bare.

Hill, vale, tree, flower—they stand distinct,
Nature to know and name. What then?
A Voice spoke thence which straight unlinked
Fancy from fact; see, all's in ken:
Has once my eyelid winked?

No, for the purged ear apprehends
Earth's import, not the eye late dazed.
The Voice said, "Call my works thy friends!
At Nature dost thou shrink amazed?
God is it who transcends."

SUMMUM BONUM

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee;
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem;
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea;
Breath and bloom, shade and shine—wonder, wealth, and—how far above them—
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

EPILOGUE TO ASOLANDO

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
—Pity me?

Oh, to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
—Being—who?

One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed—fight on, fare ever
There as here!"

PIPPA PASSES

A DRAMA

PERSONS

Pippa.	Jules.
Ottima.	Phene.
Sebald.	Austrian Police.
Foreign Students.	Bluphocks.
Gottlieb.	Luigi and his Mother.
Schramm.	Poor Girls.

Monsignor and his Attendants.

INTRODUCTION

New Year's Day at Asolo in the Trevisan

Scene.—*A large, mean, airy chamber. A girl,* Pippa, *from the silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

Day!
Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay,
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,

Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, than overflowed the world.

Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
A mite of my twelve hours' treasure,
The least of thy gazes or glances
(Be they grants thou art bound to or gifts above measure),
One of thy choices or one of thy chances,
(Be they tasks God imposed thee or freaks at thy pleasure)
—My Day, if I squander such labor or leisure,
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely flowing,
Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help and good—
Thy fitful sunshine-minutes, coming, going,
As if earth turned from work in gamesome mood—
All shall be mine! But thou must treat me not
As prosperous ones are treated, those who live
At hand here, and enjoy the higher lot,
In readiness to take what thou wilt give,
And free to let alone what thou refusest;
For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest
Me, who am only Pippa—old-year's sorrow,
Cast off last night, will come again tomorrow;
Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall borrow
Sufficient strength of thee for new-year's sorrow.
All other men and women that this earth

Belongs to, who all days alike possess,
Make general plenty cure particular dearth,
Get more joy one way, if another, less;
Thou art my single day, God lends to leaven
What were all earth else, with a feel of heaven—
Sole light that helps me through the year, thy sun's!
Try now! Take Asolo's Four Happiest Ones—
And let thy morning rain on that superb
Great haughty Ottima; can rain disturb
Her Sebald's homage? All the while thy rain
Beats fiercest on her shrub-house windowpane,
He will but press the closer, breathe more warm
Against her cheek; how should she mind the storm?
And, morning past, if midday shed a gloom
O'er Jules and Phene—what care bride and groom
Save for their dear selves? 'Tis their marriage-day;
And while they leave church and go home their way,
Hand clasping hand, within each breast would be
Sunbeams and pleasant weather spite of thee.
Then, for another trial, obscure thy eve
With mist—will Luigi and his mother grieve—
The lady and her child, unmatched, forsooth,
She in her age, as Luigi in his youth,
For true content? The cheerful town, warm, close,
And safe, the sooner that thou art morose,
Receives them. And yet once again, outbreak
In storm at night on Monsignor, they make
Such stir about—whom they expect from Rome
To visit Asolo, his brothers' home,
And say here masses proper to release
A soul from pain—what storm dares hurt his peace?
Calm would he pray, with his own thoughts to ward

Thy thunder off, nor want the angels' guard.
But Pippa—just one such mischance would spoil
Her day that lightens the next twelve-month's toil
At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil!
And here I let time slip for naught!
Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam, caught
With a single splash from my ewer!
You that would mock the best pursuer,
Was my basin over-deep?
One splash of water ruins you asleep,
And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits
Wheeling and counterwheeling,
Reeling, broken beyond healing—
Now grow together on the ceiling!
That will task your wits.
Whoever it was quenched fire first, hoped to see
Morsel after morsel flee
As merrily, as giddily . . .
Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on,
Where settles by degrees the radiant cripple?
Oh, is it surely blown, my martagon?
New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes' nipple,
Plump as the flesh-bunch on some Turk bird's poll!
Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the ripple
Of ocean, bud there, fairies watch unroll
Such turban-flowers; I say, such lamps disperse
Thick red flame through that dusk green universe!
I am queen of thee, floweret!
And each fleshy blossom
Preserve I not—safer
Than leaves that embower it,

Or shells that embosom—
From weevil and chafer?
Laugh through my pane then; solicit the bee;
Gibe him, be sure; and, in midst of thy glee,
Love thy queen, worship me!

—Worship whom else? For am I not, this day,
Whate'er I please? What shall I please today?
My morn, noon, eve, and night—how spend my day?
Tomorrow I must be Pippa who winds silk,
The whole year round, to earn just bread and milk.
But, this one day, I have leave to go,
And play out my fancy's fullest games;
I may fancy all day—and it shall be so—
That I taste of the pleasures, am called by the names
Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo!

See! Up the hillside yonder, through the morning,
Someone shall love me, as the world calls love;
I am no less than Ottima, take warning!
The gardens, and the great stone house above,
And other house for shrubs, all glass in front,
Are mine; where Sebald steals, as he is wont,
To court me, while old Luca yet reposes;
And therefore, till the shrub-house door uncloses,
I—what now?—give abundant cause for prate
About me—Ottima, I mean—of late,
Too bold, too confident she'll still face down
The spitefullest of talkers in our town.
How we talk in the little town below!
But love, love, love—there's better love, I know!

This foolish love was only day's first offer;
I choose my next love to defy the scoffer;
For do not our Bride and Bridegroom sally
Out of Possagno church at noon?
Their house looks over Orcana valley—
Why should not I be the bride as soon
As Ottima? For I saw, beside,
Arrive last night that little bride—
Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash
Of the pale snow-pure cheek and black bright tresses,
Blacker than all except the black eyelash;
I wonder she contrives those lids no dresses!
So strict was she, the veil
Should cover close her pale
Pure cheeks—a bride to look at and scarce touch,
Scarce touch, remember, Jules! For are not such
Used to be tended, flower-like, every feature,
As if one's breath would fray the lily of a creature?
A soft and easy life these ladies lead!
Whiteness in us were wonderful indeed.
Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,
Keep that foot its lady primness,
Let those ankles never swerve
From their exquisite reserve,
Yet have to trip along the streets like me,
All but naked to the knee!
How will she ever grant her Jules a bliss
So startling as her real first infant kiss?
Oh, no—not envy, this!

—Not envy, sure!—for if you gave me
Leave to take or to refuse,
In earnest, do you think I'd choose
That sort of new love to enslave me?
Mine should have lapped me round from the beginning;
As little fear of losing it as winning;
Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate their wives,
And only parents' love can last our lives.
At eve the Son and Mother, gentle pair,
Commune inside our turret; what prevents
My being Luigi? While that mossy lair
Of lizards through the wintertime is stirred
With each to each imparting sweet intents
For this new-year, as brooding bird to bird
(For I observe of late, the evening walk
Of Luigi and his mother, always ends
Inside our ruined turret, where they talk,
Calmer than lovers, yet more kind than friends),
Let me be cared about, kept out of harm,
And schemed for, safe in love as with a charm;
Let me be Luigi! If I only knew
What was my mother's face—my father, too!
Nay, if you come to that, best love of all
Is God's; then why not have God's love befall
Myself as, in the palace by the Dome,
Monsignor?—who tonight will bless the home
Of his dead brother; and God bless in turn
That heart which beats, those eyes which mildly burn
With love for all men! I tonight at least,
Would be that holy and beloved priest.

Now wait!—even I already seem to share
In God's love: what does New-year's hymn declare?
What other meaning do these verses bear?

All service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not "a small event!" Why "small"?
Costs it more pain that this, ye call
A "great event," should come to pass,
Than that? Untwine me from the mass
Of deeds which make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in or exceed!

And more of it, and more of it!—oh yes—
I will pass each, and see their happiness,
And envy none—being just as great, no doubt,
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they!
A pretty thing to care about
So mightily, this single holiday!
But let the sun shine! Wherefore repine?
—With thee to lead me, O Day of mine,
Down the grass path gray with dew,
Under the pine-wood, blind with boughs,
Where the swallow never flew
Nor yet cicala dared carouse—
No, dared carouse! [*She enters the street*

I. Morning

Scene.—*Up the Hillside, inside the Shrub-house.* Luca's *wife,* Ottima, *and her paramour, the German* Sebald.

Sebald [*sings*].

Let the watching lids wink!
Day's ablaze with eyes, think!
Deep into the night, drink!

Ottima. Night? Such may be your Rhineland
nights, perhaps;
But this blood-red beam through the shutter's chink
—We call such light the morning: let us see!
Mind how you grope your way, though! How these tall
Naked geraniums straggle! Push the lattice
Behind that frame!—Nay, do I bid you?—Sebald,
It shakes the dust down on me! Why, of course
The slide-bolt catches. Well, are you content,
Or must I find you something else to spoil?
Kiss and be friends, my Sebald! Is 't full morning?
Oh, don't speak then!
Sebald. Aye, thus it used to be.
Ever your house was, I remember, shut
Till midday; I observed that, as I strolled
On mornings through the vale here; country girls
Were noisy, washing garments in the brook,
Hinds drove the slow white oxen up the hills;
But no, your house was mute, would ope no eye.
And wisely; you were plotting one thing there,

Nature, another outside. I looked up—
Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,
Silent as death, blind in a flood of light,
Oh, I remember!—and the peasants laughed
And said, "The old man sleeps with the young wife."
This house was his, this chair, this window—his!
Ottima. Ah, the clear morning! I can see St. Mark's;
That black streak is the belfry. Stop: Vicenza
Should lie—there's Padua, plain enough, that blue!
Look o'er my shoulder, follow my finger!
Sebald. Morning?
It seems to me a night with a sun added.
Where's dew, where's freshness? That bruised plant, I bruised
In getting through the lattice yestereve,
Droops as it did. See, here's my elbow's mark
I' the dust o' the sill.
Ottima. Oh, shut the lattice, pray!
Sebald. Let me lean out. I cannot scent blood here,
Foul as the morn may be.
There, shut the world out!
How do you feel now, Ottima? There, curse
The world and all outside! Let us throw off
This mask: how do you bear yourself? Let's out
With all of it.
Ottima. Best never speak of it.
Sebald. Best speak again and yet again of it.
Till words cease to be more than words. "His blood,"
For instance—let those two words mean "His blood"
And nothing more. Notice, I'll say them now,
"His blood."

Ottima. Assuredly if I repented
The deed—
Sebald. Repent? Who should repent, or why?
What puts that in your head? Did I once say
That I repented?
Ottima. No; I said the deed—
Sebald. "The deed" and "the event"—just now it was
"Our passion's fruit"—the devil take such cant!
Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,
I am his cutthroat, you are—
Ottima. Here's the wine;
I brought it when we left the house above,
And glasses too—wine of both sorts. Black? White then?
Sebald. But am not I his cutthroat? What are you?
Ottima. There trudges on his business from the Duomo
Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood
And bare feet; always in one place at church,
Close under the stone wall by the south entry.
I used to take him for a brown cold piece
Of the wall's self, as out of it he rose
To let me pass—at first, I say, I used—
Now, so has that dumb figure fastened on me,
I rather should account the plastered wall
A piece of him, so chilly does it strike.
This, Sebald?
Sebald. No, the white wine—the white wine!
Well, Ottima, I promised no new year
Should rise on us the ancient shameful way;

Nor does it rise. Pour on! To your black eyes!
Do you remember last damned New Year's day?
Ottima. You brought those foreign prints. We looked at them
Over the wine and fruit. I had to scheme
To get him from the fire. Nothing but saying
His own set wants the proof-mark, roused him up
To hunt them out.
Sebald. 'Faith, he is not alive
To fondle you before my face.
Ottima. Do you
Fondle me then! Who means to take your life
For that, my Sebald?
Sebald. Hark you, Ottima!
One thing to guard against. We'll not make much
One of the other—that is, not make more
Parade of warmth, childish officious coil,
Than yesterday—as if, sweet, I supposed
Proof upon proof were needed now, now first,
To show I love you—yes, still love you—love you
In spite of Luca and what's come to him—
Sure sign we had him ever in our thoughts,
White sneering old reproachful face and all!
We'll even quarrel, love, at times, as if
We still could lose each other, were not tied
By this—conceive you?
Ottima. Love!
Sebald. Not tied so sure!
Because though I was wrought upon, have struck
His insolence back into him—am I
So surely yours?—therefore forever yours?

Ottima. Love, to be wise (one counsel pays another),
Should we have—months ago, when first we loved,
For instance that May morning we two stole
Under the green ascent of sycamores—
If we had come upon a thing like that
Suddenly—
Sebald. "A thing"—there again—"a thing!"
Ottima. Then, Venus' body, had we come upon
My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered corpse
Within there, at his couch-foot, covered close—
Would you have pored upon it? Why persist
In poring now upon it? For 'tis here
As much as there in the deserted house;
You cannot rid your eyes of it. For me,
Now he is dead I hate him worse; I hate—
Dare you stay here? I would go back and hold
His two dead hands, and say, "I hate you worse,
Luca, than"—
Sebald. Off, off—take your hands off mine,
'Tis the hot evening—off! oh, morning, is it?
Ottima. There's one thing must be done—you know what thing.
Come in and help to carry. We may sleep
Anywhere in the whole wide house tonight.
Sebald. What would come, think you, if we let him lie
Just as he is? Let him lie there until
The angels take him! He is turned by this
Off from his face beside, as you will see.
Ottima. This dusty pane might serve for looking-glass.
Three, four—four gray hairs! Is it so you said

A plait of hair should wave across my neck?
No—this way.
Sebald. Ottima, I would give your neck,
Each splendid shoulder, both those breasts of yours,
That this were undone! Killing! Kill the world,
So Luca lives again!—aye, lives to sputter
His fulsome dotage on you—yes, and feign
Surprise that I return at eve to sup,
When all the morning I was loitering here—
Bid me dispatch my business and begone.
I would—
Ottima. See!
Sebald. No, I'll finish. Do you think
I fear to speak the bare truth once for all?
All we have talked of, is at bottom, fine
To suffer; there's a recompense in guilt;
One must be venturous and fortunate—
What is one young for, else? In age we'll sigh
O'er the wild, reckless, wicked days flown over;
Still, we have lived; the vice was in its place.
But to have eaten Luca's bread, have worn
His clothes, have felt his money swell my purse—
Do lovers in romances sin that way?
Why, I was starving when I used to call
And teach you music, starving while you plucked me
These flowers to smell!
Ottima. My poor lost friend!
Sebald. He gave me
Life, nothing else; what if he did reproach
My perfidy, and threaten, and do more—
Had he no right? What was to wonder at?

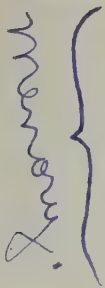
He sat by us at table quietly—
Why must you lean across till our cheeks touched?
Could he do less than make pretense to strike?
'Tis not the crime's sake—I'd commit ten crimes
Greater, to have this crime wiped out, undone!
And you—oh, how feel you? Feel you for me?
Ottima. Well then, I love you better now than ever,
And best (look at me while I speak to you)—
Best for the crime; nor do I grieve, in truth,
This mask, this simulated ignorance,
This affectation of simplicity,
Falls off our crime; this naked crime of ours
May not now be looked over—look it down!
Great? Let it be great; but the joys it brought,
Pay they or no its price? Come: they or it
Speak not! The past, would you give up the past
Such as it is, pleasure and crime together?
Give up that noon I owned my love for you?
The garden's silence! even the single bee
Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopped,
And where he hid you only could surmise
By some campanula chalice set a-swing.
Who stammered—"Yes, I love you?"
Sebald. And I drew
Back; put far back your face with both my hands
Lest you should grow too full of me—your face
So seemed athirst for my whole soul and body!
Ottima. And when I ventured to receive you here,
Made you steal hither in the mornings—
Sebald. When
I used to look up 'neath the shrub-house here,

Till the red fire on its glazed windows spread
To a yellow haze?
Ottima. Ah—my sign was, the sun
Inflamed the sear side of yon chestnut-tree
Nipped by the first frost.
Sebald. You would always laugh
At my wet boots: I had to stride through grass
Over my ankles.
Ottima. Then our crowning night!
Sebald. The July night?
Ottima. The day of it too, Sebald!
When heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed with heat,
Its black-blue canopy suffered descend
Close on us both, to weigh down each to each,
And smother up all life except our life.
So lay we till the storm came.
Sebald. How it came!
Ottima. Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burned through the pine-tree roof, here burned and there,
As if God's messenger through the close wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me; then broke
The thunder like a whole sea overhead—

* * *

Sebald. Slower, Ottima!
Do not lean on me!
Ottima. Sebald, as we lay,
Who said, "Let death come now! 'Tis right to die!

Right to be punished! Naught completes such bliss
But woe!" Who said that?
Sebald. How did we ever rise?
Was't that we slept? Why did it end?
Ottima. I felt you
Taper into a point the ruffled ends
Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid lips.
My hair is fallen now: knot it again!
Sebald. I kiss you now, dear Ottima, now and now!
This way? Will you forgive me—be once more
My great queen?
Ottima. Bind it thrice about my brow;
Crown me your queen, your spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent in sin. Say that!
Sebald. I crown you
My great white queen, my spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent—
[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing—*



The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

[PIPPA *passes.*

Sebald. God's in his heaven! Do you hear that? Who spoke?

You, you spoke!

Ottima. Oh—that little ragged girl!
She must have rested on the step: we give them
But this one holiday the whole year round.
Did you ever see our silk-mills—their inside?
There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.
She stoops to pick my double heartsease—Sh!
She does not hear: call you out louder!

Sebald. Leave me!
Go, get your clothes on—dress those shoulders!

Ottima. Sebald?

Sebald. Wipe off that paint! I hate you.

Ottima. Miserable!

Sebald. My God, and she is emptied of it now!
Outright now!—how miraculously gone
All of the grace—had she not strange grace once?
Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes,
No purpose holds the features up together,
Only the cloven brow and puckered chin
Stay in their places; and the very hair,
That seemed to have a sort of life in it,
Drops, a dead web!

Ottima. Speak to me—not of me.

Sebald. That round great full-orbed face, where not an angle
Broke the delicious indolence—all broken!

Ottima. To me—not of me! Ungrateful, perjured cheat!
A coward, too: but ingrate's worse than all!
Beggar—my slave—a fawning, cringing lie!
Leave me! Betray me! I can see your drift!

A lie that walks and eats and drinks!
Sebald. My God!
Those morbid, olive, faultless shoulder-blades—
I should have known there was no blood beneath!
Ottima. You hate me then? You hate me then?
Sebald. To think
She would succeed in her absurd attempt,
And fascinate by sinning, show herself
Superior—guilt from its excess superior
To innocence! That little peasant's voice
Has righted all again. Though I be lost,
I know which is the better, never fear,
Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,
Nature or trick! I see what I have done,
Entirely now! Oh, I am proud to feel
Such torments—let the world take credit thence—
I, having done my deed, pay too its price!
I hate, hate—curse you! God's in his heaven!
Ottima. —Me!
Me! no, no, Sebald, not yourself—kill me!
Mine is the whole crime. Do but kill me—then
Yourself—then—presently—first hear me speak
I always meant to kill myself—wait, you!
Lean on my breast—not as a breast; don't love me
The more because you lean on me, my own
Heart's Sebald! There, there, both deaths presently!
Sebald. My brain is drowned now—quite drowned: all I feel
Is . . . is, at swift-recurring intervals,
A hurry-down within me, as of waters
Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit:

There they go—whirls from a black, fiery sea!

Ottima. Not me—to him, O God, be merciful!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA *is passing from the hillside to Orcana. Foreign Students of painting and sculpture, from Venice, assembled opposite the house of* JULES, *a young French statuary, at Possagno.*

1*st Student.* Attention! My own post is beneath this window, but the pomegranate clump yonder will hide three or four of you with a little squeezing, and Schramm and his pipe must lie flat in the balcony. Four, five—who's a defaulter? We want everybody, for Jules must not be suffered to hurt his bride when the jest's found out.

2nd Student. All here! Only our poet's away—never having much meant to be present, moonstrike him! The airs of that fellow, that Giovacchino! He was in violent love with himself, and had a fair prospect of thriving in his suit, so unmolested was it—when suddenly a woman falls in love with him, too; and out of pure jealousy he takes himself off to Trieste, immortal poem and all—whereto is this prophetical epitaph appended already, as Bluphocks assures me—*"Here a mammoth-poem lies, Fouled to death by butterflies."* His own fault, the simpleton! Instead of cramp couplets, each like a knife in your entrails, he should write, says Bluphocks, both classically and intelligibly.—*Æsculapius, an Epic. Catalogue of the drugs: Hebe's plaister—One strip Cools your lip. Phœbus's emulsion—One bottle Clears your throttle. Mercury's bolus—One box Cures—*

3rd Student. Subside, my fine fellow! If the marriage was over by ten o'clock, Jules will certainly be here in a minute with his bride.

2nd Student. Good!—Only, so should the poet's muse have been universally acceptable, says Bluphocks, *et canibus nostris*—and Delia not better known to our literary dogs than the boy Giovacchino!

1st Student. To the point now. Where's Gottlieb, the new-comer? Oh—listen, Gottlieb, to what has called down this piece of friendly vengeance on Jules, of which we now assemble to witness the winding-up. We are all agreed, all in a tale, observe, when Jules shall burst out on us in a fury by and by: I am spokesman—the verses that are to undeceive Jules bear my name of Lutwyche—but each professes himself alike insulted by this strutting stone-squarer, who came alone from Paris to Munich, and thence with a crowd of us to Venice and Possagno here, but proceeds in a day or two alone again—oh, alone indubitably!—to Rome and Florence. He, forsooth, take up his portion with these dissolute, brutalized, heartless bunglers!—so he was heard to call us all: now, is Schramm brutalized, I should like to know? Am I heartless?

Gottlieb. Why, somewhat heartless; for, suppose Jules a coxcomb as much as you choose, still, for this mere coxcombry, you will have brushed off—what do folks style it?—the bloom of his life.

Is it too late to alter? These love-letters now, you call his—I can't laugh at them.

4th Student. Because you never read the sham letters of our inditing which drew forth these.

Gottlieb. His discovery of the truth will be frightful.

4th Student. That's the joke. But you should have joined us at the beginning; there's no doubt he loves the girl—loves a model he might hire by the hour!

Gottlieb. See here! "He has been accustomed," he writes, "to have Canova's women about him, in stone, and the world's women beside him, in flesh; these being as much below, as those above, his soul's aspiration; but now he is to have the reality." There you laugh again! I say, you wipe off the very dew of his youth.

1st Student. Schramm! (Take the pipe out of his mouth, somebody!) Will Jules lose the bloom of his youth?

Schramm. Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this world: look at a blossom—it drops presently, having done its service and lasted its time; but fruits succeed, and where would be the blossom's place could it continue? As well affirm that your eye is no longer in your body, because its earliest favorite, whatever it may have first loved to look on, is dead and done with—as that any affection is lost to the soul when its first object, whatever happened first to satisfy it, is superseded in due course. Keep but ever looking, whether with the body's eye or the mind's, and you will soon find something to look on! Has a man done wondering at women?—there follow men, dead and alive, to wonder at. Has he done wondering at men?—there's God to wonder at; and the faculty of wonder may be, at the same time, old and tired enough with respect to its first object, and yet young and fresh sufficiently, so far as concerns its novel one. Thus—

1st Student. Put Schramm's pipe into his mouth again! There you see! Well, this Jules—a wretched fribble

—oh, I watched his disportings at Possagno, the other day! Canova's gallery—you know: there he marches first resolvedly past great works by the dozen without vouchsafing an eye; all at once he stops full at the *Psiche-fanciulla*—cannot pass that old acquaintance without a nod of encouragement—"In your new place, beauty? Then behave yourself as well here as at Munich—I see you!" Next he posts himself deliberately before the unfinished *Pietà* for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden, and thrusts his very nose into—I say, into—the group; by which gesture you are informed that precisely the sole point he had not fully mastered in Canova's practice was a certain method of using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint—and that, likewise, has he mastered at length! Good-by, therefore, to poor Canova—whose gallery no longer needs detain his successor Jules, the predestinated novel thinker in marble!

5th Student! Tell him about the women; go on to the women!

1st Student. Why, on that matter he could never be supercilious enough. How should we be other (he said) than the poor devils you see, with those debasing habits we cherish? He was not to wallow in that mire, at least; he would wait, and love only at the proper time, and meanwhile put up with the *Psiche-fanciulla.* Now, I happened to hear of a young Greek—real Greek girl at Malamocco; a true Islander, do you see, with Alciphron's "hair like sea-moss"—Schramm knows!—white and quiet as an apparition, and fourteen years old at farthest—a daughter of Natalia, so she swears—that hag Natalia, who helps us to models at three *lire* an hour. We selected

this girl for the heroine of our jest. So first, Jules received a scented letter—somebody had seen his Tydeus at the Academy, and my picture was nothing to it: a profound admirer bade him persevere—would make herself known to him ere long. (Paolina, my little friend of the *Fenice*, transcribes divinely.) And in due time, the mysterious correspondent gave certain hints of her peculiar charms —the pale cheeks, the black hair—whatever, in short, had struck us in our Malamocco model: we retained her name, too—Phene, which is, by interpretation, sea-eagle. Now, think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his monitress: and fancy us over these letters, two, three times a day, to receive and dispatch! I concocted the main of it: relations were in the way—secrecy must be observed—in fine, would he wed her on trust, and only speak to her when they were indissolubly united? St—st—Here they come!

6th Student. Both of them! Heaven's love, speak softly, speak within yourselves!

5th Student. Look at the bridegroom! Half his hair in storm and half in calm—patted down over the left temple—like a frothy cup one blows on to cool it! and the same old blouse that he murders the marble in!

2nd Student. Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy!—rich, that your face may the better set it off.

6th Student. And the bride! Yes, sure enough, our Phene! Should you have known her in her clothes? How magnificently pale!

Gottlieb. She does not also take it for earnest, I hope?

1*st Student.* Oh, Natalia's concern, that is! We settle with Natalia.

6*th Student.* She does not speak—has evidently let out no word. The only thing is, will she equally remember the rest of her lesson, and repeat correctly all those verses which are to break the secret to Jules?

Gottlieb. How he gazes on her! Pity—pity!

1*st Student.* They go in; now, silence! You three—not nearer the window, mind, than that pomegranate—just where the little girl, who a few minutes ago passed us singing, is seated!

II.—NOON

SCENE—*Over Orcana. The house of* JULES, *who crosses its threshold with* PHENE: *she is silent, on which* JULES *begins*—

Do not die, Phene! I am yours now, you
Are mine now; let fate reach me how she likes,
If you'll not die: so, never die! Sit here—
My workroom's single seat. I over-lean
This length of hair and lustrous front; they turn
Like an entire flower upward: eyes, lips, last
Your chin—no, last your throat turns: 'tis their scent
Pulls down my face upon you. Nay, look ever
This one way till I change, grow you—I could
Change into you, beloved!
You by me,
And I by you; this is your hand in mine,
And side by side we sit: all's true. Thank God!

I have spoken: speak you!
O my life to come!
My Tydeus must be carved that's there in clay;
Yet how be carved, with you about the room?
Where must I place you? When I think that once
This roomfull of rough block-work seemed my heaven
Without you! Shall I ever work again,
Get fairly into my old ways again,
Bid each conception stand while, trait by trait,
My hand transfers its lineaments to stone?
Will my mere fancies live near you, their truth—
The live truth, passing and repassing me,
Sitting beside me?
Now speak!
Only first,
See, all your letters! Was't not well contrived?
Their hiding-place is Psyche's robe; she keeps
Your letters next her skin: which drops out foremost?
Ah—this that swam down like a first moonbeam
Into my world!
Again those eyes complete
Their melancholy survey, sweet and slow,
Of beauty—to the human archetype.
On me, with pity, yet some wonder too:
As if God bade some spirit plague a world,
And this were the one moment of surprise
And sorrow while she took her station, pausing
O'er what she sees, finds good, and must destroy!
What gaze you at? Those? Books, I told you of;
Let your first word to me rejoice them, too:
This minion, a Coluthus, writ in red

Bister and azure by Bessarion's scribe—
Read this line—no, shame—Homer's be the Greek
First breathed me from the lips of my Greek girl!
This Odyssey in coarse black vivid type
With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page,
To mark great places with due gratitude;
"He said, and on Antinous directed
A bitter shaft"—a flower blots out the rest!
Again upon your search? My statues, then!
—Ah, do not mind that—better that will look
When cast in bronze—an Almaign Kaiser, that,
Swart-green and gold, with truncheon based on hip.
This, rather, turn to! What, unrecognized?
I thought you would have seen that here you sit
As I imagined you—Hippolyta,
Naked upon her bright Numidian horse.
Recall you this, then? "Carve in bold relief"—
So you commanded—"carve, against I come,
A Greek, in Athens, as our fashion was,
Feasting, bay-filleted and thunder-free,
Who rises 'neath the lifted myrtle-branch.
'Praise those who slew Hipparchus!' cry the guests,
'While o'er thy head the singer's myrtle waves
As erst above our champion: stand up all!'"
See, I have labored to express your thought.
Quite round, a cluster of mere hands and arms,
(Thrust in all senses, all ways, from all sides,
Only consenting at the branch's end
They strain toward) serves for frame to a sole face,
The Praiser's, in the center: who with eyes
Sightless, so bend they back to light inside

His brain where visionary forms throng up,
Sings, minding not that palpitating arch
Of hands and arms, nor the quick drip of wine
From the drenched leaves o'erhead, nor crowns cast off,
Violet and parsley crowns to trample on—
Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts approve,
Devoutly their unconquerable hymn.
But you must say a "well" to that—say "well!"
Because you gaze—am I fantastic, sweet?
Gaze like my very life's-stuff, marble—marbly
Even to the silence! Why, before I found
The real flesh Phene, I inured myself
To see, throughout all nature, varied stuff
For better nature's birth by means of art:
With me, each substance tended to one form
Of beauty—to the human archetype.
On every side occurred suggestive germs
Of that—the tree, the flower—or take the fruit—
Some rosy shape, continuing the peach,
Curved beewise o'er its bough; as rosy limbs,
Depending, nestled in the leaves; and just
From a cleft rose-peach the whole Dryad sprang.
But of the stuffs one can be master of,
How I divined their capabilities!
From the soft-rinded smoothening facile chalk
That yields your outline to the air's embrace,
Half-softened by a halo's pearly gloom;
Down to the crisp imperious steel, so sure
To cut its one confided thought clean out
Of all the world. But marble!—'neath my tools
More pliable than jelly—as it were

Some clear primordial creature dug from depths
In the earth's heart, where itself breeds itself,
And whence all baser substance may be worked;
Refine it off to air, you may—condense it
Down to the diamond—is not metal there,
When o'er the sudden speck my chisel trips?
—Not flesh, as flake off flake I scale, approach,
Lay bare those bluish veins of blood asleep?
Lurks flame in no strange windings where, surprised
By the swift implement sent home at once,
Flushes and glowings radiate and hover
About its track?
Phene? what—why is this?
That whitening cheek, those still dilating eyes!
Ah, you will die—I knew that you would die!

PHENE *begins, on his having long remained silent.*

Now the end's coming; to be sure, it must
Have ended sometime! Tush, why need I speak
Their foolish speech? I cannot bring to mind
One half of it, beside; and do not care
For old Natalia now, nor any of them.
Oh, you—what are you?—if I do not try
To say the words Natalia made me learn,
To please your friends—it is to keep myself
Where your voice lifted me, by letting that
Proceed; but can it? Even you, perhaps,
Cannot take up, now you have once let fall,
The music's life, and me along with that—
No, or you would! We'll stay, then, as we are—

Above the world.
You creature with the eyes!
If I could look forever up to them,
As now you let me—I believe all sin,
All memory of wrong done, suffering borne,
Would drop down, low and lower, to the earth
Whence all that's low comes, and there touch and stay
—Never to overtake the rest of me,
All that, unspotted, reaches up to you,
Drawn by those eyes! What rises is myself,
Not me the shame and suffering; but they sink,
Are left, I rise above them. Keep me so,
Above the world!
But you sink, for your eyes
Are altering—altered! Stay—"I love you, love"—
I could prevent it if I understood:
More of your words to me; was 't in the tone
Or the words, your power?
Or stay—I will repeat
Their speech, if that contents you! Only change
No more, and I shall find it presently
Far back here, in the brain yourself filled up.
Natalia threatened me that harm should follow
Unless I spoke their lesson to the end,
But harm to me, I thought she meant, not you.
Your friends—Natalia said they were your friends
And meant you well—because, I doubted it,
Observing (what was very strange to see)
On every face, so different in all else,
The same smile girls like me are used to bear,
But never men, men cannot stoop so low;

Yet your friends, speaking of you, used that smile,
That hateful smirk of boundless self-conceit
Which seems to take possession of the world
And make of God a tame confederate,
Purveyor to their appetites—you know!
But still Natalia said they were your friends,
And they assented though they smiled the more,
And all came round me—that thin Englishman
With light lank hair seemed leader of the rest;
He held a paper—"What we want," said he,
Ending some explanation to his friends,
"Is something slow, involved, and mystical,
To hold Jules long in doubt, yet take his taste
And lure him on until, at innermost
Where he seeks sweetness' soul, he may find—this!
—As in the apple's core, the noisome fly;
For insects on the rind are seen at once,
And brushed aside as soon, but this is found
Only when on the lips or loathing tongue."
And so he read what I have got by heart:
I'll speak it—"Do not die, love! I am yours"—
No—is not that, or like that, part of words
Yourself began by speaking? Strange to lose
What cost such pains to learn! Is this more right?

I am a painter who cannot paint;
In my life, a devil rather than saint;
In my brain, as poor a creature too:
No end to all I cannot do!
Yet do one thing at least I can—
Love a man or hate a man

Supremely: thus my lore began.
Through the Valley of Love I went,
In the lovingest spot to abide,
And just on the verge where I pitched my tent,
I found Hate dwelling beside.
(Let the Bridegroom ask what the painter meant,
Of his Bride, of the peerless Bride!)
And further, I traversed Hate's grove,
In the hatefullest nook to dwell;
But lo, where I flung myself prone, couched Love
Where the shadow threefold fell.
(The meaning—those black bride's-eyes above,
Not a painter's lip should tell!)

"And here," said he, "Jules probably will ask,
'You have black eyes, Love—you are, sure enough,
My peerless bride—then do you tell indeed
What needs some explanation! What means this?'"
—And I am to go on, without a word—

So I grew wise in Love and Hate,
From simple that I was of late.
Once when I loved, I would enlace
Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form, and face
Of her I loved, in one embrace—
As if by mere love I could love immensely!
Once, when I hated, I would plunge
My sword, and wipe with the first lunge
My foe's whole life out like a sponge—
As if by mere hate I could hate intensely!
But now I am wiser, know better the fashion

How passion seeks aid from its opposite passion;
And if I see cause to love more, hate more
Than ever man loved, ever hated before—
And seek in the Valley of Love,
The nest, or the nook in Hate's Grove,
Where my soul may surely reach
The essence, naught less, of each,
The Hate of all Hates, the Love
Of all Loves, in the Valley or Grove—
I find them the very warders
Each of the other's borders.
When I love most, Love is disguised
In Hate; and when Hate is surprised
In Love, then I hate most: ask
How Love smiles through Hate's iron casque,
Hate grins through Love's rose-braided mask—
And how, having hated thee,
I sought long and painfully
To reach thy heart, nor prick
The skin but pierce to the quick—
Ask this, my Jules, and be answered straight
By thy bride—how the painter Lutwyche can hate!

JULES *interposes*

Lutwyche! Who else? But all of them, no doubt,
Hated me: they at Venice—presently
Their turn, however! You I shall not meet:
If I dreamed, saying this would wake me.
Keep
What's here, the gold—we cannot meet again,

Consider! and the money was but meant
For two years' travel, which is over now,
All chance or hope or care or need of it.
This—and what comes from selling these, my casts
And books and medals, except—let them go
Together, so the produce keeps you safe
Out of Natalia's clutches! If by chance
(For all's chance here) I should survive the gang
At Venice, root out all fifteen of them,
We might meet somewhere, since the world is wide.
[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing—*

Give her but a least excuse to love me!
When—where—
How—can this arm establish her above me,
If fortune fixed her as my lady there,
There already, to eternally reprove me?
("Hist!"—said Kate the Queen;
But "Oh!" cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
"'Tis only a page that carols unseen,
Crumbling your hounds their messes!")

Is she wronged?—To the rescue of her honor,
My heart!
Is she poor?—What costs it to be styled a donor?
Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.
But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!
("Nay, list!"—bade Kate the Queen;
And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
"'Tis only a page that carols unseen
Fitting your hawks their jesses!")

[PIPPA *passes.*

JULES *resumes*

What name was that the little girl sang forth?
Kate? The Cornaro, doubtless, who renounced
The crown of Cyprus to be lady here
At Asolo, where still her memory stays,
And peasants sing how once a certain page
Pined for the grace of her so far above
His power of doing good to, "Kate the Queen—
She never could be wronged, be poor," he sighed,
"Need him to help her!"
Yes, a bitter thing
To see our lady above all need of us;
Yet so we look ere we will love; not I,
But the world looks so. If whoever loves
Must be, in some sort, god or worshiper,
The blessing or the blest-one, queen or page,
Why should we always choose the page's part?
Here is a woman with utter need of me—
I find myself queen here, it seems!
How strange!
Look at the woman here with the new soul,
Like my own Psyche—fresh upon her lips
Alit the visionary butterfly,
Waiting my word to enter and make bright,
Or flutter off and leave all blank as first.
This body had no soul before, but slept
Or stirred, was beauteous or ungainly, free
From taint or foul with stain, as outward things
Fastened their image on its passiveness;
Now, it will wake, feel, live—or die again!

Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff
Be Art—and further, to evoke a soul
From form be nothing? This new soul is mine!

Now, to kill Lutwyche, what would that do?—save
A wretched dauber, men will hoot to death
Without me, from their hooting. Oh, to hear
God's voice plain as I heard it first, before
They broke in with their laughter! I heard them
Henceforth, not God.
To Ancona—Greece—some isle!
I wanted silence only; there is clay
Everywhere. One may do whate'er one likes
In Art; the only thing is, to make sure
That one does like it—which takes pains to know.
Scatter all this, my Phene—this mad dream!
Who, what is Lutwyche, what Natalia's friends,
What the whole world except our love—my own,
Own Phene? But I told you, did I not,
Ere night we travel for your land—some isle
With the sea's silence on it? Stand aside—
I do but break these paltry models up
To begin Art afresh. Meet Lutwyche, I—
And save him from my statue meeting him?
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Like a god going through his world, there stands
One mountain for a moment in the dusk,
Whole brotherhoods of cedars on its brow;
And you are ever by me while I gaze
—Are in my arms as now—as now—as now!
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Some unsuspected isle in far-off seas!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA *is passing from Orcana to the Turret. Two or three of the Austrian Police loitering with* BLUPHOCKS, *an English vagabond, just in view of the Turret.*

Bluphocks. So, that is your Pippa, the little girl who passed us singing? Well, your Bishop's Intendant's money shall be honestly earned:—now, don't make me that sour face because I bring the Bishop's name into the business; we know he can have nothing to do with such horrors; we know that he is a saint and all that a bishop should be, who is a great man beside. *Oh, were but every worm a maggot, Every fly a grig, Every bough a Christmas faggot, Every tune a jig!* In fact, I have abjured all religions; but the last I inclined to was the Armenian: for I have traveled, do you see, and at Koenigsberg, Prussia Improper (so styled because there's a sort of bleak hungry sun there), you might remark over a venerable house-porch a certain Chaldee inscription; and brief as it is, a mere glance at it used absolutely to change the mood of every bearded passenger. In they turned, one and all; the young and lightsome, with no irreverent pause, the aged and decrepit, with a sensible alacrity: 'twas the Grand Rabbi's abode, in short. Struck with curiosity, I lost no time in learning Syriac—(these are vowels, you dogs—follow my stick's end in the mud—*Celarent, Darii, Ferio!*) and one morning presented myself, spelling-book in hand, a, b, c—I picked it out letter by letter, and what was the purport of this miraculous posy? Some cherished legend of the past, you'll say—*"How Moses hocus-pocussed Egypt's land with fly and locust"*—or, *"How to Jonah sounded harshish, Get thee up and go to Tarshish"*—or,

"How the angel meeting Balaam, Straight his ass returned a salaam." In no wise! *"Shackabrack—Boach—somebody or other—Isaach, Re-cei-ver, Pur-cha-ser, and Ex-chan-ger of—Stolen Goods!"* So, talk to me of the religion of a bishop! I have renounced all bishops save Bishop Beveridge—mean to live so—and die—*As some Greek dog-sage, dead and merry, Hellward bound in Charon's wherry with food for both worlds, under and upper, Lupine-seed and Hecate's supper, and never an obolus.* (Though thanks to you, or this Intendant through you, or this Bishop through his Intendant—I possess a burning pocketful of *zwanzigers*) *To pay Stygian Ferry!*

1*st Policeman.* There is the girl, then; go and deserve them the moment you have pointed out to us Signor Luigi and his mother. [*To the rest.*] I have been noticing a house yonder, this long while—not a shutter unclosed since morning!

2*nd Policeman.* Old Luca Gaddi's, that owns the silk-mills here: he dozes by the hour, wakes up, sighs deeply, says he should like to be Prince Metternich, and then dozes again, after having bidden young Sebald, the foreigner, set his wife to playing draughts. Never molest such a household; they mean well.

Bluphocks. Only, cannot you tell me something of this little Pippa I must have to do with? One could make something of that name. Pippa—that is, short for Felippa—rhyming to *Panurge consults Hertrippa—Believest thou, King Agrippa?* Something might be done with that name.

2*nd Policeman.* Put into rhyme that your head and a ripe muskmelon would not be dear at half a *zwanziger!*

Leave this fooling, and look out; the afternoon 's over or nearly so.

3rd Policeman. Where in this passport of Signor Luigi does our Principal instruct you to watch him so narrowly? There? What's there beside a simple signature? (That English fool's busy watching.)

2nd Policeman. Flourish all round—"Put all possible obstacles in his way"; oblong dot at the end—"Detain him till further advices reach you"; scratch at bottom—"Send him back on pretense of some informality in the above"; ink-spirt on right-hand side (which is the case here)—"Arrest him at once." Why and wherefore, I don't concern myself, but my instructions amount to this: if Signor Luigi leaves home tonight for Vienna—well and good, the passport deposed with us for our *visa* is really for his own use, they have misinformed the Office, and he means well; but let him stay over tonight —there has been the pretense we suspect, the accounts of his corresponding and holding intelligence with the Carbonari are correct, we arrest him at once, tomorrow comes Venice, and presently Spielberg. Bluphocks makes the signal, sure enough! That is he, entering the turret with his mother, no doubt.

III.—EVENING

SCENE.—*Inside the Turret on the Hill above Asolo.* LUIGI *and his* Mother *entering.*

Mother. If there blew wind, you'd hear a long sigh, easing
The utmost heaviness of music's heart.

Luigi. Here in the archway?
Mother. Oh, no, no—in farther,
Where the echo is made, on the ridge.
Luigi. Here surely, then.
How plain the tap of my heel as I leaped up!
Hark—"Lucius Junius!" The very ghost of a voice
Whose body is caught and kept by—what are those?
Mere withered wall flowers, waving overhead?
They seem an elvish group with thin bleached hair
That lean out of their topmost fortress—look
And listen, mountain men, to what we say,
Hand under chin of each grave earthy face.
Up and show faces all of you!—"All of you!"
That's the king dwarf with the scarlet comb; old Franz,
Come down and meet your fate? Hark—"Meet your fate!"
Mother. Let him not meet it, my Luigi—do not
Go to his City! Putting crime aside,
Half of these ills of Italy are feigned:
Your Pellicos and writers for effect,
Write for effect.
Luigi. Hush! Say A writes, and B.
Mother. These A's and B's write for effect, I say.
Then, evil is in its nature loud, while good
Is silent; you hear each petty injury,
None of his virtues; he is old beside,
Quiet and kind, and densely stupid. Why
Do A and B not kill him themselves?
Luigi. They teach
Others to kill him—me—and, if I fail,
Others to succeed; now, if A tried and failed,

I could not teach that: mine's the lesser task.
Mother, they visit night by night—
Mother. —You, Luigi?
Ah, will you let me tell you what you are?
Luigi. Why not? Oh, the one thing you fear to hint,
You may assure yourself I say and say
Ever to myself! At times—nay, even as now
We sit—I think my mind is touched, suspect
All is not sound; but is not knowing that
What constitutes one sane or otherwise?
I know I am thus—so, all is right again.
I laugh at myself as through the town I walk,
And see men merry as if no Italy
Were suffering; then I ponder—"I am rich,
Young, healthy; why should this fact trouble me,
More than it troubles these?" But it does trouble.
No, trouble's a bad word; for as I walk
There's springing and melody and giddiness,
And old quaint turns and passages of my youth,
Dreams long forgotten, little in themselves,
Return to me—whatever may amuse me,
And earth seems in a truce with me, and heaven
Accords with me, all things suspend their strife,
The very cicala laughs, "There goes he, and there!
Feast him, the time is short; he is on his way
For the world's sake: feast him this once, our friend!"
And in return for all this, I can trip
Cheerfully up the scaffold-steps. I go
This evening, mother!
Mother. But mistrust yourself—
Mistrust the judgment you pronounce on him!

Luigi. Oh, there I feel—am sure that I am right!
Mother. Mistrust your judgment, then, of the mere means
To this wild enterprise. Say you are right—
How should one in your state e'er bring to pass
What would require a cool head, a cold heart,
And a calm hand? You never will escape.
Luigi. Escape? To even wish that would spoil all.
The dying is best part of it. Too much
Have I enjoyed these fifteen years of mine,
To leave myself excuse for longer life:
Was not life pressed down, running o'er with joy,
That I might finish with it ere my fellows
Who, sparelier feasted, make a longer stay?
I was put at the board-head, helped to all
At first; I rise up happy and content.
God must be glad one loves his world so much.
I can give news of earth to all the dead
Who ask me:—last year's sunsets, and great stars
Which had a right to come first and see ebb
The crimson wave that drifts the sun away—
Those crescent moons with notched and burning rims
That strengthened into sharp fire, and there stood,
Impatient of the azure—and that day
In March, a double rainbow stopped the storm—
May's warm, slow, yellow moonlit summer nights—
Gone are they, but I have them in my soul!
Mother. (He will not go!)
Luigi. You smile at me? 'Tis true—
Voluptuousness, grotesqueness, ghastliness,

Environ my devotedness as quaintly
As round about some antique altar wreathe
The rose festoons, goats' horns, and oxen's skulls.
Mother. See now: you reach the city, you must cross
His threshold—how?
Luigi. Oh, that's if we conspired!
Then would come pains in plenty, as you guess—
But guess not how the qualities most fit
For such an office, qualities I have,
Would little stead me, otherwise employed,
Yet prove of rarest merit only here.
Everyone knows for what his excellence
Will serve, but no one ever will consider
For what his worst defect might serve; and yet
Have you not seen me range our coppice yonder
In search of a distorted ash?—I find
The wry spoilt branch a natural perfect bow.
Fancy the thrice-sage, thrice-precautioned man
Arriving at the palace on my errand!
No, no! I have a handsome dress packed up—
White satin here, to set off my black hair;
In I shall march—for you may watch your life out
Behind thick walls, make friends there to betray you;
More than one man spoils everything. March straight—
Only, no clumsy knife to fumble for.
Take the great gate, and walk (not saunter) on
Through guards and guards—I have rehearsed it all
Inside the turret here a hundred times
Don't ask the way of whom you meet, observe!
But where they cluster thickliest is the door
Of doors; they'll let you pass—they'll never blab

Each to the other, he knows not the favorite,
Whence he is bound and what's his business now.
Walk in—straight up to him; you have no knife:
Be prompt, how should he scream? Then, out with you!
Italy, Italy, my Italy!
You're free, you're free! Oh, mother, I could dream
They got about me—Andrea from his exile,
Pier from his dungeon, Gualtier from his grave!
Mother. Well, you shall go. Yet seems this patriotism
The easiest virtue for a selfish man
To acquire: he loves himself—and next, the world—
If he must love beyond—but naught between:
As a short-sighted man sees naught midway
His body and the sun above. But you
Are my adored Luigi, ever obedient
To my least wish, and running o'er with love;
I could not call you cruel or unkind.
Once more, your ground for killing him!—then go!
Luigi. Now do you try me, or make sport of me?
How first the Austrians got these provinces—
(If that is all, I'll satisfy you soon)
—Never by conquest but by cunning, for
That treaty whereby—
Mother. Well?
Luigi. (Sure, he's arrived,
The telltale cuckoo; spring's his confidant,
And he lets out her April purposes!)
Or—better go at once to modern time,
He has—they have—in fact, I understand
But can't restate the matter; that's my boast:
Others could reason it out to you, and prove

Things they have made me feel.
Mother. Why go tonight?
Morn's for adventure. Jupiter is now
A morning-star. I cannot hear you, Luigi!
Luigi. "I am the bright and morning-star, saith God—
And, "to such an one I give the morning-star."
The gift of the morning-star! Have I God's gift
Of the morning-star?
Mother. Chiara will love to see
That Jupiter an evening-star next June.
Luigi. True, mother. Well for those who live through June!
Great noontides, thunder-storms, all glaring pomps
That triumph at the heels of June the god
Leading his revel through our leafy world.
Yes, Chiara will be here.
Mother. In June: remember,
Yourself appointed that month for her coming.
Luigi. Was that low noise the echo?
Mother. The night-wind.
She must be grown—with her blue eyes upturned
As if life were one long and sweet surprise:
In June she comes.
Luigi. We were to see together
The Titian at Treviso. There, again!

[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing*—

A king lived long ago,
In the morning of the world,
When earth was nigher heaven than now.

And the king's locks curled,
Disparting o'er a forehead full
As the milk-white space 'twixt horn and horn
Of some sacrificial bull—
Only calm as a babe new-born:
For he was got to a sleepy mood,
So safe from all decrepitude,
Age with its bane, so sure gone by,
(The gods so loved him while he dreamed)
That, having lived thus long, there seemed
No need the king should ever die.

Luigi. No need that sort of king should ever die!

Among the rocks his city was:
Before his palace, in the sun,
He sat to see his people pass,
And judge them every one
From its threshold of smooth stone.
They haled him many a valley-thief
Caught in the sheep-pens, robber-chief
Swarthy and shameless, beggar-cheat,
Spy-prowler, or rough pirate found
On the sea-sand left aground;
And sometimes clung about his feet,
With bleeding lid and burning cheek,
A woman, bitterest wrong to speak
Of one with sullen thickset brows:
And sometimes from the prison-house
The angry priests a pale wretch brought,
Who through some chink had pushed and pressed

On knees and elbows, belly and breast,
Worm-like into the temple—caught
He was by the very god,
Whoever in the darkness strode
Backward and forward, keeping watch
O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to catch!
These, all and everyone,
The king judged, sitting in the sun.

Luigi. That king should still judge sitting in the sun!

His councilors, on left and right,
Looked anxious up—but no surprise
Disturbed the king's old smiling eyes,
Where the very blue had turned to white.
'Tis said, a Python scared one day
The breathless city, till he came,
With forky tongue and eyes on flame,
Where the old king sat to judge alway;
But when he saw the sweepy hair
Girt with a crown of berries rare
Which the god will hardly give to wear
To the maiden who singeth, dancing bare
In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch lights,
At his wondrous forest rites—
Seeing this, he did not dare
Approach that threshold in the sun,
Assault the old king smiling there.
Such grace had kings when the world begun!

[PIPPA *passes.*

Luigi. And such grace have they, now that the world ends!
The Python at the city, on the throne,
And brave men, God would crown for slaying him,
Lurk in by-corners lest they fall his prey.
Are crowns yet to be won in this late time,
Which weakness makes me hesitate to reach?
'Tis God's voice calls; how could I stay? Farewell!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA *is passing from the Turret to the Bishop's Brother's House, close to the Duomo S. Maria. Poor* Girls *sitting on the steps.*

1*st Girl.* There goes a swallow to Venice—the stout seafarer!
Seeing those birds fly makes one wish for wings.
Let us all wish; you wish first!
2*nd Girl.* I? This sunset
To finish.
3*rd Girl.* That old—somebody I know,
Grayer and older than my grandfather,
To give me the same treat he gave last week—
Feeding me on his knee with fig-peckers,
Lampreys and red Breganze-wine, and mumbling
The while some folly about how well I fare,
Let sit and eat my supper quietly:
Since had he not himself been late this morning,
Detained at—never mind where—had he not—
"Eh, baggage, had I not!"—
2*nd Girl.* How she can lie!
3*rd Girl.* Look there—by the nails!

2nd Girl. What makes your fingers red?
3rd Girl. Dipping them into wine to write bad words with
On the bright table: how he laughed!
1st Girl. My turn.
Spring's come and summer's coming. I would wear
A long loose gown, down to the feet and hands,
With plaits here, close about the throat, all day;
And all night lie, the cool long nights, in bed;
And have new milk to drink, apples to eat,
Deuzans and junetings, leather-coats—ah, I should say,
This is away in the fields—miles!
3rd Girl. Say at once
You'd be at home—she'd always be at home!
Now comes the story of the farm among
The cherry orchards, and how April snowed
White blossoms on her as she ran. Why, fool,
They've rubbed the chalk-mark out, how tall you were,
Twisted your starling's neck, broken his cage,
Made a dunghill of your garden!
1st Girl. They destroy
My garden since I left them? Well—perhaps
I would have done so—so I hope they have!
A fig-tree curled out of our cottage wall;
They called it mine, I have forgotten why,
It must have been there long ere I was born:
Cric—cric—I think I hear the wasps o'erhead
Pricking the papers strung to flutter there
And keep off birds in fruit-time—coarse long papers,
And the wasps eat them, prick them through and through.

3rd Girl. How her mouth twitches! Where was I?—
before
She broke in with her wishes and long gowns
And wasps—would I be such a fool!—Oh, here!
This is my way: I answer everyone
Who asks me why I make so much of him—
(If you say, "you love him"—straight "he'll not be gulled!")
"He that seduced me when I was a girl
Thus high—had eyes like yours, or hair like yours,
Brown, red, white"—as the case may be; that pleases!
See how that beetle burnishes in the path!
There sparkles he along the dust; and, there—
Your journey to that maize-tuft spoiled at least!
1st Girl. When I was young, they said if you killed one
Of those sunshiny beetles, that his friend
Up there would shine no more that day nor next.
2nd Girl. When you were young? Nor are you young, that's true.
How your plump arms, that were, have dropped away!
Why, I can span them. Cecco beats you still?
No matter, so you keep your curious hair.
I wish they'd find a way to dye our hair
Your color—any lighter tint, indeed,
Than black—the men say they are sick of black,
Black eyes, black hair!
4th Girl. Sick of yours, like enough.
Do you pretend you ever tasted lampreys
And ortolans? Giovita, of the palace,
Engaged (but there 's no trusting him) to slice me
Polenta with a knife that had cut up

An ortolan.

2nd Girl. Why, there! Is not that Pippa
We are to talk to, under the window—quick!—
Where the lights are?

1st Girl. That she? No, or she would sing,
For the Intendant said—

3rd Girl. Oh, you sing first!
Then, if she listens and comes close—I'll tell you—
Sing that song the young English noble made,
Who took you for the purest of the pure,
And meant to leave the world for you—what fun!

2nd Girl [*sings*].

You'll love me yet!—and I can tarry
Your love's protracted growing:
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry,
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartful now: some seed
At least is sure to strike
And yield—what you'll not pluck indeed,
Not love, but, may be, like.

You'll look at least on love's remains,
A grave's one violet:
Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.
What's death? You'll love me yet!

3rd Girl [to PIPPA, *who approaches.*] Oh, you may come closer—we shall not eat you! Why, you seem the very person that the great rich handsome Englishman has fallen so violently in love with. I'll tell you all about it.

IV.—NIGHT

SCENE.—*Inside the Palace by the Duomo.* MONSIGNOR, *dismissing his* Attendants.

Monsignor. Thanks, friends, many thanks! I chiefly desire life now, that I may recompense every one of you. Most I know something of already. What, a repast prepared? *Benedicto benedicatur*—ugh, ugh! Where was I? Oh, as you were remarking, Ugo, the weather is mild, very unlike winter weather; but I am a Sicilian, you know, and shiver in your Julys here. To be sure, when 'twas full summer at Messina, as we priests used to cross in procession the great square on Assumption Day, you might see our thickest yellow tapers twist suddenly in two, each like a falling star, or sink down on themselves in a gore of wax. But go, my friends, but go! [*To the* Intendant.] Not you, Ugo! [*The others leave the apartment.*] I have long wanted to converse with you, Ugo.

Intendant. Uguccio—

Monsignor. . . . 'guccio Stefani, man! of Ascoli, Fermo and Fossombruno—what I do need instructing about are these accounts of your administration of my poor brother's affairs. Ugh! I shall never get through a third part of your accounts; take some of these dainties before we attempt it, however. Are you bashful to that degree? For me, a crust and water suffice.

Intendant. Do you choose this especial night to question me?

Monsignor. This night, Ugo. You have managed my late brother's affairs since the death of our elder brother

—fourteen years and a month, all but three days. On the Third of December, I find him—

Intendant. If you have so intimate an acquaintance with your brother's affairs, you will be tender of turning so far back: they will hardly bear looking into, so far back.

Monsignor. Aye, aye, ugh, ugh—nothing but disappointments here below! I remark a considerable payment made to yourself on this Third of December. Talk of disappointments! There was a young fellow here, Jules, a foreign sculptor I did my utmost to advance, that the Church might be a gainer by us both; he was going on hopefully enough, and of a sudden he notifies to me some marvelous change that has happened in his notions of Art. Here's his letter: "He never had a clearly conceived Ideal within his brain till today. Yet since his hand could manage a chisel, he has practiced expressing other men's Ideals; and, in the very perfection he has attained to, he foresees an ultimate failure: his unconscious hand will pursue its prescribed course of old years, and will reproduce with a fatal expertness the ancient types, let the novel one appear never so palpably to his spirit. There is but one method of escape: confiding the virgin type to as chaste a hand, he will turn painter instead of sculptor, and paint, not carve, its characteristics"—strike out, I dare say, a school like Correggio: how think you, Ugo?

Intendant. Is Correggio a painter?

Monsignor. Foolish Jules! and yet, after all, why foolish? He may—probably will—fail egregiously; but if there should arise a new painter, will it not be in some such way, by a poet now, or a musician (spirits who have conceived and perfected an Ideal through some other

channel), transferring it to this, and escaping our conventional roads by pure ignorance of them; eh, Ugo? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo!

Intendant. Sir, I can submit no longer to this course of yours. First, you select the group of which I formed one—next you thin it gradually—always retaining me with your smile—and so do you proceed till you have fairly got me alone with you between four stone walls. And now then? Let this farce, this chatter, end now; what is it you want with me?

Monsignor. Ugo!

Intendant. From the instant you arrived, I felt your smile on me as you questioned me about this and the other article in those papers—why your brother should have given me this villa, that *podere*—and your nod at the end meant—what?

Monsignor. Possibly that I wished for no loud talk here. If once you set me coughing, Ugo!—

Intendant. I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess: now ask me what for! what service I did him—ask me!

Monsignor. I would better not: I should rip up old disgraces, let out my poor brother's weaknesses. By the way, Maffeo of Forli (which, I forgot to observe, is your true name), was the interdict ever taken off you, for robbing that church at Cesena?

Intendant. No, nor needs be; for when I murdered your brother's friend, Pasquale, for him—

Monsignor. Ah, he employed you in that business, did he? Well, I must let you keep, as you say, this villa and that *podere,* for fear the world should find out my

relations were of so indifferent a stamp? Maffeo, my family is the oldest in Messina, and century after century have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under heaven: my own father—rest his soul!—I have, I know, a chapel to support that it may rest; my dear two dead brothers were—what you know tolerably well; I, the youngest, might have rivaled them in vice, if not in wealth: but from my boyhood I came out from among them, and so am not partaker of their plagues. My glory springs from another source; or if from this, by contrast only—for I, the bishop, am the brother of your employers, Ugo. I hope to repair some of their wrong, however; so far as my brother's ill-gotten treasure reverts to me, I can stop the consequences of his crime—and not one *soldo* shall escape me. Maffeo, the sword we quiet men spurn away, you shrewd knaves pick up and commit murders with; what opportunities the virtuous forego, the villainous seize. Because, to pleasure myself, apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw—am I therefore to let you, the offscouring of the earth, seduce the poor and ignorant by appropriating a pomp these will be sure to think lessens the abominations so unaccountably and exclusively associated with it? Must I let villas and *poderi* go to you, a murderer and thief, that you may beget by means of them other murderers and thieves? No—if my cough would but allow me to speak!

Intendant. What am I to expect? You are going to punish me?

Monsignor. Must punish you, Maffeo. I cannot

afford to cast away a chance. I have whole centuries of sin to redeem, and only a month or two of life to do it in. How should I dare to say—

Intendant. "Forgive us our trespasses"?

Monsignor. My friend, it is because I avow myself a very worm, sinful beyond measure, that I reject a line of conduct you would applaud perhaps. Shall I proceed, as it were, a-pardoning? —I?—who have no symptom of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuousest efforts will keep myself out of mortal sin, much less keep others out. No: I do trespass, but will not double that by allowing you to trespass.

Intendant. And suppose the villas are not your brother's to give, nor yours to take? Oh, you are hasty enough just now!

Monsignor. 1, 2—No. 3!—aye, can you read the substance of a letter, No. 3, I have received from Rome? It is precisely on the ground there mentioned, of the suspicion I have that a certain child of my late elder brother, who would have succeeded to his estates, was murdered in infancy by you, Maffeo, at the instigation of my late younger brother—that the Pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to condign punishment, but the taking all pains, as guardian of the infant's heritage for the Church, to recover it parcel by parcel, howsoever, whensoever, and wheresoever. While you are now gnawing those fingers, the police are engaged in sealing up your papers, Maffeo, and the mere raising my voice brings my people from the next room to dispose of yourself. But I want you to confess quietly, and save me raising my voice. Why, man, do I not know the old story?

The heir between the succeeding heir, and this heir's ruffianly instrument, and their complot's effect, and the life of fear and bribes and ominous smiling silence? Did you throttle or stab my brother's infant? Come now!

Intendant. So old a story, and tell it no better? When did such an instrument ever produce such an effect? Either the child smiles in his face, or, most likely, he is not fool enough to put himself in the employer's power so thoroughly; the child is always ready to produce —as you say—howsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever.

Monsignor. Liar!

Intendant. Strike me? Ah, so might a father chastise! I shall sleep soundly tonight at least, though the gallows await me tomorrow; for what a life did I lead! Carlo of Cesena reminds me of his connivance, every time I pay his annuity; which happens commonly thrice a year. If I remonstrate, he will confess all to the good bishop—you!

Monsignor. I see through the trick, caitiff! I would you spoke truth for once. All shall be sifted, however—seven times sifted.

Intendant. And how my absurd riches encumbered me! I dared not lay claim to above half my possessions. Let me but once unbosom myself, glorify Heaven, and die!

Sir, you are no brutal, dastardly idiot like your brother I frightened to death: let us understand one another. Sir, I will make away with her for you—the girl—here close at hand; not the stupid obvious kind of killing; do not speak—know nothing of her nor of me! I see her every day—saw her this morning. Of course there is to be no killing; but at Rome the courtesans perish off every three years, and I can entice her thither—have indeed begun

operations already. There's a certain lusty, blue-eyed, florid-complexioned English knave I and the Police employ occasionally. You assent, I perceive—no, that's not it—assent I do not say—but you will let me convert my present havings and holdings into cash, and give me time to cross the Alps? 'Tis but a little black-eyed, pretty singing Felippa, gay, silk-winding girl. I have kept her out of harm's way up to this present; for I always intended to make your life a plague to you with her. 'Tis as well settled once and forever. Some women I have procured will pass Bluphocks, my handsome scoundrel, off for somebody; and once Pippa entangled!—you conceive? Through her singing? Is it a bargain?

[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing.*

Overhead the tree-tops meet,
Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's feet;
There was naught above me, naught below,
My childhood had not learned to know:
For, what are the voices of birds
—Aye, and of beasts—but words, our words,
Only so much more sweet?
The knowledge of that with my life begun.
But I had so near made out the sun,
And counted your stars, the seven and one,
Like the fingers of my hand:
Nay, I could all but understand
Wherefore through heaven the white moon ranges;
And just when out of her soft fifty changes
No unfamiliar face might overlook me—
Suddenly God took me.

[PIPPA *passes.*

Monsignor [*springing up*]. My people—one and all —all—within there! Gag this villain—tie him hand and foot! He dares—I know not half he dares—but remove him—quick! *Miserere mei, Domine!* Quick, I say!

SCENE.—PIPPA'S *chamber again. She enters it.*

The bee with his comb,
The mouse at her dray,
The grub in his tomb,
While winter away;
But the firefly and hedge-shrew and lobworm, I pray,
How fare they?
Ha, ha, thanks for your counsel, my Zanze!
"Feast upon lampreys, quaff Breganze"—
The summer of life so easy to spend,
And care for tomorrow so soon put away!
But winter hastens at summer's end,
And firefly, hedge-shrew, lobworm, pray,
How fare they?
No bidding me then to—what did Zanze say?
"Pare your nails pearlwise, get your small feet shoes
More like"—what said she?—"and less like canoes!"
How pert that girl was!—would I be those pert,
Impudent, staring women! It had done me,
However, surely no such mighty hurt
To learn his name who passed that jest upon me:
No foreigner, that I can recollect,
Came, as she says, a month since, to inspect
Our silk-mills—none with blue eyes and thick rings

Of raw-silk-colored hair, at all events.
Well, if old Luca keep his good intents,
We shall do better, see what next year brings!
I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not appear
More destitute than you perhaps next year!
Bluph—something! I had caught the uncouth name
But for Monsignor's people's sudden clatter
Above us—bound to spoil such idle chatter
As ours; it were indeed a serious matter
If silly talk like ours should put to shame
The pious man, the man devoid of blame,
The—ah, but—ah, but, all the same,
No mere mortal has a right
To carry that exalted air;
Best people are not angels quite:
While—not the worst of people's doings scare
The devil; so there's that proud look to spare!
Which is mere counsel to myself, mind! for
I have just been the holy Monsignor:
And I was you too, Luigi's gentle mother,
And you too, Luigi!—how that Luigi started
Out of the turret—doubtlessly departed
On some good errand or another,
For he passed just now in a traveler's trim,
And the sullen company that prowled
About his path, I noticed, scowled
As if they had lost a prey in him.
And I was Jules the sculptor's bride,
And I was Ottima beside,
And now what am I?—tired of fooling.
Day for folly, night for schooling!

New Year's day is over and spent,
Ill or well, I must be content.
Even my lily's asleep, I vow:
Wake up—here's a friend I've plucked you!
Call this flower a heart's-ease now!
Something rare, let me instruct you,
Is this, with petals triply swollen,
Three times spotted, thrice the pollen;
While the leaves and parts that witness
Old proportions and their fitness,
Here remain unchanged, unmoved now;
Call this pampered thing improved now!
Suppose there's a king of the flowers
And a girl-show held in his bowers—
"Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,"
Says he, "Zanze from the Brenta,
I have made her gorge polenta
Till both cheeks are near as bouncing
As her—name there's no pronouncing!
See this heightened color too,
For she swilled Breganze wine
Till her nose turned deep carmine;
'Twas but white when wild she grew.
And only by this Zanze's eyes
Of which we could not change the size,
The magnitude of all achieved
Otherwise, may be perceived."

Oh, what a drear, dark close to my poor day!
How could that red sun drop in that black cloud?
Ah, Pippa, morning's rule is moved away,

Dispensed with, never more to be allowed!
Day's turn is over, now arrives the night's.
O lark, be day's apostle
To mavis, merle, and throstle,
Bid them their betters jostle
From day and its delights!
But at night, brother owlet; over the woods,
Toll the world to thy chantry;
Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods
Full complines with gallantry:
Then, owls and bats,
Cowls and twats,
Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods,
Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry!
[*After she has began to undress herself.*
Now, one thing I should like to really know:
How near I ever might approach all these
I only fancied being, this long day—
Approach, I mean, so as to touch them, so
As to—in some way . . . move them—if you please,
Do good or evil to them some slight way.
For instance, if I wind
Silk tomorrow, my silk may bind
[*Sitting on the bedside.*
And border Ottima's cloak's hem.
Ah me, and my important part with them,
This morning's hymn half promised when I rose!
True in some sense or other, I suppose.
[*As she lies down.*

God bless me! I can pray no more tonight.
No doubt, some way or other, hymns say right.
All service ranks the same with God—
With God, whose puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.
[*She sleeps.*

NOTES

SONGS FROM PARACELSUS

The poem *Paracelsus* is divided into five parts, each of which describes m important period in the experience of Paracelsus, the celebrated Ger- uan-Swiss physician, alchemist, and philosopher of the sixteenth century. ook I tells of the eagerness and pride with which he set out in his youth o compass all knowledge; he believed himself commissioned of God o learn Truth and to give it to mankind. Books II and III show him ollowed and idolized by multitudes to whom he imparts the fragments f knowledge he has gained. But though these fragments seem to his isciples the sum and substance of wisdom, his own mind is preoccupied ith a desolating certainty that he has hardly touched on the outer con- nes of truth. In Book IV, after experiencing the ingratitude of his ckle adherents, he is represented as abjuring the dreams of his youth. t this point comes the first of the three songs given in the text. He uilds an imaginary altar on which he offers up the aspirations, the hopes, ne plans, with which he had begun his career.

Song I

1-3. *Cassia* is an unidentified fragrant plant; the wood of the *sandal* ee is also fragrant; *labdanum* or *ladanum,* is a resinous gum of dark color nd pungent odor, exuding from various species of the cistus, a plant found ound the Mediterranean; *aloe-balls* are made from a bitter resinous uice extracted from the leaves of aloe-plants; *nard* is an ointment made om an aromatic plant and used in the East Indies. These substances ave long been traditionally associated in literature. In *Psalms* xlv, 8 we ad: "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad." Milton in *Paradise ost,* v, 293, speaks of "flowering odors, cassia, nard, and balms."

4. *Such balsam.* The meaning of ll. 4-8 is obscure. "Sea-side moun- in pedestals" are presumably cliffs. In the tops of the trees on these iffs the wind, weary of its rough work on the ocean, has gently dropped ie fragrant things it has swept up from the island.

9-16. In this stanza the faint sweetness from the spices used in em- lming, and the perfume still clinging to the tapestry in an ancient royal

room carry suggestions of vanished power and beauty that add an appro priate pathos to the richly piled altar on which Paracelsus is to offer up the "lovely fancies" of his youth. "Shredded" is a transferred epithet referring really to "arras," but transferred to the perfume of the arras.

Song II. (Book IV)

When Paracelsus confesses the failure of his pursuit of absolute knowl edge, his friend Festus urges him to redeem the past by making new use of what he has gained; but Paracelsus has no courage to attempt a reor ganization of his life in accordance with a new ideal. His answer to Festus is the second of the three songs. He afterwards calls it,

> "The sad rhyme of the men who proudly clung
> To their first fault and withered in their pride."

The song is a beautiful and clear allegory, vivid in its pictures, rapid and musical.

Song III. (Book V)

In Book V Paracelsus is described as lying ill in the Hospital of St Sebastian. Festus is endeavoring to divert the current of his dying friend's fierce, delirious thoughts into a gentler channel. He brings up one pictur after another of the early happy life of Paracelsus, and dwells on the grandeur of his mind and achievements, and on the fame that shall be his. But the desired peace comes only when Festus sings the song o the river Mayne beside which their youth had been spent. At the end of the song Paracelsus exclaims,

> "My heart! they loose my heart, those simple words;
> Its darkness passes which naught else could touch."

The Mayne, or Main, is the most important of the right-hand tributaries o the Rhine. Wurzburg, where Festus and Paracelsus had been as students, is on its banks. Its University was especially noted for its medical department. Mr. Stopford Brooke (*The Poetry of Robert Brown ing*, p. 99) says of this lovely lyric: "I have driven through that graciou country of low hill and dale and wide water-meadows, where unde flowered banks only a foot high the slow river winds in gentleness; and this poem is steeped in the sentiment of the scenery. But, as before Browning quickly slides away from the beauty of inanimate nature int a record of the animals that haunt the streams. He could not get on long with mountains and rivers alone. He must people them with breath ing, feeling things; anything for life!"

CAVALIER TUNES

These three stirring songs represent the gay, reckless loyalty of the Cavaliers to the cause of King Charles I and their contempt for his Puritan opposers. The Puritans wore closely cropped hair; hence the Parliament which came together in 1640 and was controlled by the opponents of the King, is dubbed "crop-headed." John Pym and John Hampden were leaders in the struggle against the tyranny of the King. Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Sir Henry Vane were also adherents of Oliver Cromwell. Rupert, Prince of the Palatinate, was a nephew of Charles I and was a noted cavalry leader on the royal side during the Civil War. The followers of the King unfurled the royal standard at Nottingham in August, 1642; Kentish Sir Byng raised a troop and hurried on to join the main royal army. In September occurred the battle of Edgehill. The "Noll" (l. 16 of "Give a Rouse") is Oliver Cromwell. The third song was entitled originally "My Wife Gertrude." It was she who held the castle of Brancepeth against the Roundheads.

THE LOST LEADER

This poem indignantly records a poet's defection from the cause of progress and liberty. Who this poet might be was for some time a matter of conjecture. Wordsworth, Southey, and Charles Kingsley, all of whom had gone from radicalism in their youth to conservatism in their old age, were severally proposed as the original of Browning's portrait. The poem was published in 1845, two years after Wordsworth was made poet laureate. Early in 1845 Wordsworth was presented at court, a proceeding which aroused comment—sometimes amused, sometimes indignant—from those who recalled the poet's early scorn of rank and titles. Browning and Miss Barrett exchanged several gay letters on this subject in May, 1845. In commenting on a letter from Miss Martineau describing Wordsworth in his home in 1846, Browning wrote, "Did not Shelley say long ago, 'He had no more imagination than a pint-pot'—though in those days he used to walk about France and Flanders like a man. *Now*, he is 'most comfortable in his worldly affairs' and just this comes of it! He lives the best twenty years of his life after the way of his own heart—and when one presses in to see the result of his rare experiment—what the *one* alchemist whom fortune has allowed to get all his coveted materials and set to work at last with fire and melting pot—what he produces after all the talk of him and the like of him; why, you get *pulvis et cinis*—a man at the mercy of the tongs and shovel." In later life, however, Browning spoke of Wordsworth in a different tone. In a letter to Mr. Grosart, written Feb. 24, 1875, he said, "I have been asked the question you now address me with, and as duly answered, I can't remember how many times. There is no sort of objection to one more assurance, or rather confession, on my part, that I *did* in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerated

personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model; one from which this or the other particular feature may be selected and turned to account. Had I intended more—above all such a boldness as portraying the entire man—I should not have talked about 'handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon.' These never influenced the change of politics in the great poet—whose defection, nevertheless, accompanied as it was by a regular face-about of his special party, was, to my private apprehension, and even mature consideration, an event to deplore. But, just as in the tapestry on my wall I can recognize figures which have *struck out* a fancy, on occasion, that though truly enough thus derived, yet would be preposterous as a copy: so, though I dare not deny the original of my little poem, I altogether refuse to have it considered as the 'very effigies' of such a moral and intellectual superiority." For an interesting parallelism in theme, see Whittier's "Ichabod."

20. *Whom.* The reference is to the lower classes, whom the Liberals were endeavoring to rouse to aspiration and action. The Conservatives opposed such beginings of independence.

29. *Best fight on well.* It is the deserting leader who is exhorted to fight well. Though it is pain to have him desert their party, they have gloried in his power and it would be an even greater pain to see him weak. They wish him to fight well even though their cause is thereby menaced.

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX

This poem was written during Mr. Browning's first journey to Italy in 1838. He sailed from London in a merchant vessel bound for Trieste on which he found himself the only passenger. The weather was stormy and for the first fortnight Browning was extremely ill. As they passed through the straights of Gibraltar the captain supported him upon deck that he might not lose the sight. Of the composition of the poem he says "I wrote it under the bulwark of a vessel off the African coast, after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse 'York' there in my stable at home." The poem was written in pencil on the flyleaf of Bartoli's *Simboli*, a favorite book of his. Browning says that there was no sort of historical foundation for the story, but the Pacification of Ghent in 1576 has been suggested as an appropriate background. The incident narrated could naturally belong to the efforts of the united cities of Holland, Zealand and the Southern Netherlands to combat the tyranny of Philip II.

6. Of this line Miss Barrett wrote: "It drew us out into the night as witnesses."

13. *'Twas moonset.* The distance from Ghent to Aix is something over a hundred miles. The first horse gave out at Hasselt, about eighty miles from Ghent; the second horse failed at Dalhem in sight of Aix. Roland

made the whole distance between midnight of one day and sunset of the next. The minute notes of time are for dramatic and picturesque effect rather than as exact indications of progress. Even the towns are not used with the exactness of a guide-book, for Looz and Tongres are off the direct route.

17. *Mecheln.* Flemish for Mechlin. The chimes they heard were probably from the cathedral tower.

41. *Dome-spire.* Over the polygonal monument founded by Charlemagne in Aix-la-Chapelle is a dome 104 feet high and 48 feet in diameter. The reference is probably to this dome.

THE FLOWER'S NAME

This poem and "Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis," a companion poem, appeared in *Hood's Magazine,* July, 1844, under the title of "Garden Fancies." "The Flower's Name" is a description of a garden by a lover whose conception of its beauty is heightened and made vital by the memories it enshrines. Of this poem Miss Barrett wrote to Browning, "Then the 'Garden Fancies'—some of the stanzas about the name of the flower, with such exquisite music in them, and grace of every kind—and with that beautiful and musical use of the word 'meandering,' which I never remember having seen used in relation to *sound* before. It does to mate with your '*simmering* quiet' in *Sordello,* which brings the summer air into the room as sure as you read it." (*Letters of R. B. and E. B. B.,* I, 134.)

10. *Box.* An evergreen shrub, dwarf varieties of which are used for low hedges or the borders of flower-beds.

MEETING AT NIGHT AND PARTING AT MORNING

These poems were published originally simply as "Night" and "Morning." The second of these love lyrics is somewhat difficult to interpret. If the man is speaking, the "him" in l. 3 must refer to the sun. In any case, after the isolation with the woman he loved as described in the first poem, there comes with the morning a sense of the world of action to which the man must return. The two poems are fully discussed in *Poet-Lore,* Volume VII, April, May, June-July. The poems are noteworthy for the fusion of human emotion and natural scenery and for the startlingly specific phrasing of the first quatrain.

EVELYN HOPE

In this lyric are embodied Browning's faith in personal immortality, his belief in the permanence of true love and in the value of love though unrequited in this world.

34. *What meant.* From this point on through line 52 the lover repeats what he shall say to Evelyn Hope when in the life to come he claims her.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

A man is on his way across the fields to a turret where he is to meet the girl he loves. As he walks through the solitary pastures he mentally recreates the powerful life and varied interests of the city which, tradition has it, once occupied this site, and he seems to be absorbed in a melancholy recognition of the evanescence of human glory. The girl is not mentioned till stanza 5. Does the emphasis on the scenery and its historic associations unduly minimize the love element of the poem? Or is the whole picture of vanished joy and woe, pride and defeat, but a background against which stands out more clearly the rapture of the meeting in the ruined turret?

80. *Earth's returns.* This phrase refers to the ruins which are all that now remains of the centuries of folly, noise, and sin. "Them" in l. 81 refers apparently to the "fighters" and the others of the first part of the stanza.

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY

"It is an admirable piece of work crowded with keen descriptions of Nature in the Casentino, and of life in the streets of Florence. And every piece of description is so filled with the character of the 'Italian person of quality' who describes them—a petulant, humorous, easily angered, happy, observant, ignorant, poor gentleman—that Browning entirely disappears. The poem retains for us in its verse, and indeed in its light rhythm, the childlikeness, the naïveté, the simple pleasures, the ignorance and the honest boredom with the solitudes of Nature—of a whole class of Italians, not only of the time when it was written, but of the present day. It is a delightful, inventive piece of gay and pictorial humor." (Stopford Brooke, *The Poetry of Browning*, p. 322.)

33. *Corn.* In Great Britain the word is generally applied to wheat, rye, oats, and barley, not to maize as in America.

34. *Stinking hemp.* In Chapter I of James Lane Allen's *The Reign of Law* is the following passage on the odor of the hemp-field: "And now borne far through the steaming air floats an odor, balsamic, startling: the odor of those plumes and stalks and blossoms from which is exuding freely the narcotic resin of the great nettle." When the long swaths of cut hemp lies across the field, the smell is represented as strongest, "impregnating the clothing of the men, spreading far throughout the air." To many this odor is essentially unpleasant.

42. *Pulcinello-trumpet.* Pulcinello was originally the clown in the Neapolitan comedy. Later he became the Punch in Punch and Judy shows. The trumpet announces that one of these puppet plays is to be given in the public square.

43. *Scene-picture.* A picture advertising the new play.

44. *Liberal thieves.* Members of the liberal party, the party striving for Italian independence. The Person of Quality is, of course, of the aristocratic party.

47. *A sonnet.* Laudatory poetical tributes with ornamental borders were posted in public places as a method of doing homage. In this case the unknown "Reverend Don So-and-so" is ranked by his admirer with Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch, the greatest Italian poets; with St. Jerome, one of the most celebrated Fathers of the Latin Church; with Cicero, one of the greatest of Roman orators; and with St. Paul, the greatest of Christian preachers.

51. *Our Lady.* The seven swords represent symbolically the seven sorrows of the Virgin Mary, but this Person of Quality regards the gilt swords and the smart pink gowns merely as gay decorations. Religious processions of the sort described here and in lines 60-64 are frequent in European countries.

55. *It's dear.* According to the system of taxation in Italy, town dues must be paid on all provisions brought into the city.

60. *Yellow candles.* Used at funerals and in penitential processions in the Roman Church.

A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S

Mrs. Ireland says of this poem: "The Toccata as a form of composition is not the measured, deliberate working-out of some central musical theme as is the Sonata or *sound*-piece. The *Toccata,* in its early and pure form, possessed no decided subject, made such by repetition, but bore rather the form of a capricious Improvisation, or 'Impromptu.' " ("A Toccata of Galuppi's" by Mrs. Alexander Ireland, published in *London Browning Society Papers.*)

1. *Galuppi.* Baldasarre Galuppi (1706-1784) was an Italian composer born near Venice. He spent many years in England and Russia. In 1768 he became organist at St. Mark's, Venice.

4. *Your old music.* At the sound of the music Browning imaginatively re-creates the Venetian social life of the eighteenth century.

6. *St. Mark's.* The great cathedral. The Doge of Venice used to throw a ring into the sea from the ship *Bucentaur* to "denote that the Adriatic was subject to the republic of Venice as a wife is subject to her husband."

8. *Shylock's bridge.* The Rialto, a bridge over the Grand Canal. It has two rows of shops under arcades.

18. *Clavichord.* An instrument with keys and strings, something like a piano.

19-30. The musical terms in these lines show Browning's knowledge of the technicalities of the art. To one without such expert knowledge the exact musical connotation is doubtless obscure. But the epithets and phrases are in themselves sufficient to suggest the varying moods of

the Venetian merrymakers. The plaintiveness, the sighs, the sense of death, the trembling hope that life may last, the renewed love-making, the new round of futile pleasures or evil deeds, the end of it all in the grave, are clearly brought forth. An elaborate explanation of the musical terms is given in the notes to the Camberwell edition of Browning's poems.

31. *But when I sit down to reason.* The first thirty lines of the poem have recorded the effect of the music in re-creating in the poet's imagination the gay, careless life of eighteenth century Venice, and its close in death. Now when the poet endeavors to turn from that picture of death lurking under smiles, he finds that the cold music has filled his mind with an inescapable sense of the futility of life, and even his own chosen mental activities seem to him, along with the rest, hardly more than dust and ashes. Ambition and enthusiasm fade before the spell of the music.

OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE

3. *Aloed arch.* The genus aloe includes trees, shrubs, and herbs. The American variety is the century-plant. Browning's hill-side villa evidently had aloes trained to grow in an arch.

15. *The startling bell-tower Giotto raised.* Giotto began the Campanile in 1334, and after his death in 1337 the work was continued by Andrea Pisano. Its striking beauty impresses the poet as he looks out over the city. But it does more than that, for it rouses in him reflections on the progress and meaning of art.

17-24. The address to Giotto, thrown in here as it is with conversational freedom, is partially explained in lines 184-248. See note on l. 236.

30. *By a gift God grants me.* The power to re-create vividly and minutely the past. The artists of bygone centuries are called back by his imagination to their old haunts in Florence.

44. *Stands One.* The "one" (l. 44), "a lion" (l. 47), "the wronged great soul" (l. 48), and "the wronged great souls" (l. 58), all refer to the unappreciated early artists.

50. *They.* That is, the famous great artists such as Michael Angelo and Raphael. Critics "hum and buzz" around them with praise to which they are indifferent.

59. *Where their work is all to do.* Their place in the development of art is not yet understood. It must be made clear, Browning thinks, that painters like Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) come in natural succession from earlier obscure artists like Dello, that art is a real and continuous record of the human mind and heart.

67. *The mastiff girns.* When some influential critic snarls, all the imitative inferior critics take the same tone. Cf. Shelley's "Adonais," stanzas 28, 37, 38.

69. *Stefano.* A pupil of Giotto and called "Nature's ape" because his accurate representations of the human body.

72. *Vasari.* Author of *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters and*

Sculptors. (Published 1550. Translated by Mrs. Foster in *Bohn's Library.*) In his studies of art Browning made constant use of this book.

76. *Sic transit. Sic transit gloria mundi.* "So passes away the glory of the world."

84. *In fructu.* "As fruit." The fruit of Greek art at its best was that it presented in marble ideally perfect human bodies.

98. *Theseus.* The kingly statue of the reclining Theseus in the frieze of the Parthenon.

99. *Son of Priam.* In the sculptures of Ægina, Paris, the son of Priam, kneeling and drawing his bow, has a grace beyond that of any man who might think to pose as a model.

101. *Apollo.* At Delphi Apollo slew an enormous python.

102. *Niobe.* Through the vengeance of Apollo and Diana, Niobe's seven sons and seven daughters were all slain. In the Imperial Gallery of Florence there is a statue of Niobe clasping her last child.

103. *The Racer's frieze.* In the Parthenon.

104. *The dying Alexander.* A piece of ancient Greek sculpture at Florence.

108. *To submit is a mortal's duty.* The supreme beauty of the statues led men to content themselves with admiration and imitation.

113. *Growth came.* New life came to art when men ceased to rest in the perfect achievement of the past, and found a new realm opened up to them in representing the subtler activities of the soul. Lines 145-152 state the ideals that actuated the new art. The reference is to the religious art of the Italian Renaissance.

115-144. These lines sum up the reasons for the importance of the art that strives "to bring the invisible full into play" (l. 150). It may be rough-hewn and faulty; but it is greater and grander than Greek art because of its greater range, variety, and complexity, and because it reaches beyond any possible present perfection into eternity.

134. *Thy one work . . . done at a stroke.* Giotto when asked for a proof of his skill to send to the Pope, drew with one stroke of his brush a perfect circle, whence the proverb, "Rounder than the O of Giotto."

156. *Quiddit.* Quibble. The humorous rhyme "did it—quiddit" is but one of the many whimsical rhyming effects in the poem. The use of a light, semi-jocose form to give the greater emphasis to serious subject-matter is characteristic of Browning. Lowell in "A Fable for Critics" employs the same device.

161-176. Not Browning's usual attitude. Even this poem is a deification of progress through effort, not through repose.

178. *Art's spring-birth.* Nicolo the Pisan and Cimabue lived in the second half of the thirteenth century. From them to Ghiberti (1381-1455), who made the famous bronze doors of the Baptistry at Florence, and Ghirlandajo (1449-1494), a Florentine fresco painter, was a period in which Browning was especially interested. Mrs. Orr says that he owned pictures by all the artists mentioned here.

192. *Italian quicklime.* Many of the fine old Italian fresco paintings have been whitewashed over.

198. *Dree.* The pictures "endure" the doom of captivity. But they might be ferreted out if the ghosts of the old painters would only indicate where the lost works are.

201-224. He does not hope to get pictures of the famous Florentine painters, Bigordi (probably another name for Ghirlandajo), Sandro, Botticelli, Lippino (son of Fra Lippo Lippi), or Fra Angelico. But he might hope for better success in finding pieces by the obscure painters mentioned in lines 205-224. These painters are so described that we know concerning each one, some characteristic quality or work.

206. *Intonaco.* The plaster that forms the ground for fresco work.

214. *Tempera.* A pigment mixed with some vehicle soluble in water instead of with oil as in oil paintings.

218. *Barret.* A kind of cap.

230. *Zeno.* The founder of the sect of Stoics, and hence supposedly not stirred by "naked High Art."

232. *Some clay-cold vile Carlino.* Commercial dealers in art are unmoved by true beauty, but they go into ecstasies over uninspired work like that of Carlino. (Carlo Dólci, 1616-1686.)

236. *A certain precious little tablet.* Mr. Browning wrote to Professor Corson that this was a lost "Last Supper" praised by Vasari. The stanza in which this line occurs explains ll. 17-24.

237. *Buonarroti.* Michael Angelo.

241. *San Spirito,* etc. "Holy Spirit" and "All Saints," old churches in Florence.

244. *Detur amanti.* "Let it be given to the one who loves it."

245. *Koh-i-noor.* A famous Indian diamond presented to Queen Victoria in 1850.

246. *Jewel of Giamschid.* The splendid fabulous ruby of Sultan Giamschid, sometimes called "The Cup of the Sun" and "The Torch of Night." Byron ("The Giaour") says that the dark eyes of Leila were "bright as the jewel of Giamschid." The carbuncle of Giamschid is one of the treasures sought by the Caliph in Beckford's *Caliph Vathek.*

246. *The Persian Sofi.* The Sufi or Sofi is a title or surname of the Shah of Persia.

249. *A certain dotard,* etc. Radetsky (1766-1858) was in 1849-1857 governor of the Austrian possessions in Upper Italy. "The worse side of the Mont St. Gothard" is the Swiss side. "Morello" is a mountain near Florence. There had been frequent insurrections against Austria, but they had been fruitless. Browning prophesies the time when there shall be a great national council (a Witanagemot) by which, when Freedom has been restored to Florence, a new and vigorous Art shall be brought in. It will then be perceived that a monarchy nourishes the false and monstrous in art, and that "Pure Art" must come from the people.

258. *The stone of Dante.* The stone where Dante used to draw his

chair out to sit. For this and other references in stanza XXXIV see Mrs. Browning's "Casa Guidi Windows," Part I. In this poem she suggests "a parliament of the lovers of Italy."

260. *Quod videas ante*—"Which you may have seen before."

263. *Hated house.* The poet hates the rule of the House of Lorraine, and prefers the days of the painter Orgagna, in the fourteenth century, when Italy was free.

273. *Tuscan.* The literary language of Italy and not given to superlatives such as are indicated by *"issimo."*

275. *Cambuscan:* a reference to "The Squire's Tale," left unfinished by Chaucer.

276. *Alt to altissimo.* "High to highest."

277. *Beccaccia.* A woodcock.

281. *Shall I be alive.* According to Giotto's plan the tower was to have had a spire fifty braccia or cubits (about 95 feet) high. This spire has never been built.

"DE GUSTIBUS—"

The whole phrase is *De gustibus non disputandum*— "there is no disputing about tastes." Browning is writing to a friend who prefers an English landscape while the poet himself declares in favor of Italy.

2. *If our loves remain.* If we have a life after death.

4. *A cornfield.* The picture is a field of wheat with red poppies scattered through the wheat.

23. *Cypress.* It is interesting to note how many of the trees, shrubs, flowers, and fruits in Browning's poems are those of southern Europe. His poetry of nature is almost as distinctively Italian as Tennyson's is English. "The Englishman in Italy" is especially rich in vivid, picturesque details of southern scenes.

36. *Liver-wing.* The right wing. The shot hit the king in the right arm.

37. *Bourbon.* Mr. and Mrs. Browning were rejoicing at any indications that the people of Italy were awake to revolt against the Bourbons. See Mrs. Browning's "Casa Guidi Windows" and "First News from Villa Franca" and Mr. Browning's "The Italian in England."

40. *Queen Mary's saying.* For two hundred years Calais had been one of England's most important possessions. It was taken by the French in 1588, the last year of the reign of Queen Mary. What Queen Mary said of Calais, Browning says of Italy.

HOME-THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

Compare the sentiment of this poem with that of "De Gustibus—" written ten years later. In "Home Thoughts from Abroad" we have one of Browning's rare uses of the scenery of his own country.

14. *That's the wise thrush.* The power of these lines in presenting both the musical and the emotional quality of the bird's song is rivaled only by Wilson Flagg's "The Bobolink" (quoted in John Burroughs's *Birds and Poets*) and Wordsworth's "To the Cuckoo."

HOME-THOUGHTS FROM THE SEA

This poem and the preceding one express two phases of the poet's love of country: his affection for the physical beauty of England, and his pride in her political freedom. In the first poem, he turns, in thought, from the glowing color of Italy, to the more delicate loveliness of England in April; in the second poem, he longs to repay the service his country has rendered him in defeating foreign foes.

"Home-Thoughts from the Sea" was written at the same time and under the same circumstances as "How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix." The poet, aboard a vessel coasting along the shore of Africa, could see to the northwest the Portuguese Cape Vincent, near which, in 1797, England won a naval victory over Spain; southeast of Cape Vincent, on the Spanish coast, Cadiz Bay, where, in 1796, England defeated the second Spanish Armada; and southeast of Cadiz Bay, Cape Trafalgar, where, in 1805, Nelson won a famous victory over the allied fleets of France and Spain. To the northeast, the poet could see Gibraltar, the great fortress which England acquired from Spain by the Peace of Utrecht, 1713.

SAUL

1. *Abner.* The cousin of Saul and the commander of his army. *I Samuel* xiv, 50.

9. *Saul and the Spirit.* For the conflict between Saul and the evil spirit, and the refreshment that came to him when David played, see *I Samuel* xvi, 14-23.

12. *Gracious gold hair.* For the personal appearance of David, see *I Samuel* xvi, 12, 18; xvii, 42.

12. *Those lilies . . . blue.* Mrs. Coleridge wrote to Mr. Kenyon to know whether Mr. Browning had any authority for "blue lilies." Mr. Browning answered, "Lilies are of all colors in Palestine—one sort is particularized as *white* with a dark blue spot and streak—the water lily, lotus, which I think I meant, is *blue* altogether." (*Letters of R. B. and E. B. B.*, I, 523, 556.)

31. *The king-serpent.* Probably the boa-constrictor. In poetry the characteristic most often attributed to a snake is malignancy. But in this picture of the serpent lying dormant and waiting for the sloughing of its old skin in the springtime, when it will come forth with new beauty and power, the idea presented is that of tremendous force temporarily in abeyance.

42. *Then the tune.* The boy, alone in the field, tries all sorts of experi-

ments in musical attraction on the animals about him. Professor Albert S. Cook suggests that Browning is here indebted to the Greek pastoral romance of *Daphnis and Chloe*. See Smith's translation in the Bohn edition. The passages read in part as follows: "He ran through all variations of pastoral melody; he played the tune which the oxen obey, and which attracts the goats—that in which the sheep delight.

"He took his pipe from his scrip, and breathed into it very gently. The goats stood still, merely lifting up their heads. Next he played the pasture tune, upon which they all put down their heads and began to graze. Now he produced some notes soft and sweet in tone; at once his herd lay down. After this he piped in a sharp key, and they ran off to the woods as if a wolf were in sight." These quotations serve at least to show how old is the fancy that animals are affected by music.

60. The service enjoined on the men of the House of Levi is described in *I Chronicles* xxiii, 24-32.

65. *Male-sapphires.* The male sapphire exhibits, through some peculiarity of crystalline structure, a star of bright rays. It is also known as "the star sapphire" and "the asteriated sapphire." The ruby shows a clear red light at the center.

76. *Locust-flesh.* In *Leviticus,* Chapter xi, are given the laws concerning "what beasts may and what may not be eaten." See verse 22 for the rule about locusts. Cf. *Matthew* iii, 4 for the food of John the Baptist.

102. *The cherubim chariot.* The first chapter of *Ezekiel* seems to be the source of this picture.

105. *Have ye seen,* etc. The simile in lines 104-115 could have been written only by one familiar with mountain regions. Browning knew the Alps and Apennines. Did David at any time live in a mountainous country?

124. *Slow pallid sunsets.* Note the character of the similitudes so far used in describing Saul. In his agony he is like the king-serpent. His rage is like the earthquake that may tear open the rock but at the same time sets the gold free. His final release from the evil spirit is described by the sudden fall of the avalanche from the mountain summit. The look in his eyes as he comes back to life, yet seeing nothing in life to desire, is compared to pale autumn sunsets seen over the ocean, or to slow sunsets seen over a desolate hill country. All the figures contribute to our impression of Saul's power and majesty.

141. *Since my days,* etc. Compare this passage with *Pippa Passes,* Prologue, 104-113.

172. *Carouse in the past.* This line marks a change in the direction of David's thought. Up to stanza x it was the glorious past that he had been urging upon Saul's attention. But now he realizes that true inspiration comes not so much from a re-living of one's achievements, as from the thought of the permanence of one's fame and one's deeds.

192. *And behold while I sang.* At this point David is overcome by the memory of the sudden spiritual illumination that came to him in his

interview with Saul. He had reached the summit of his endeavor (l. 191) and yet knew himself powerless to give the King new life. Then there flashed upon him the truth expressed in stanzas XVII-XIX. He breaks off in lines 192-205, going, in his strong feeling, ahead of his story and commenting on what is described in stanza XIX. In stanza XV he resumes his narrative.

204. *Hebron.* David watches the slow coming of the dawn over the hill on which is situated the town of Hebron.

205. *Kidron.* A brook near Jerusalem. It is fed by springs, and the amount of water in it is sensibly decreased by the extreme heat of the day.

214. *Ere error had bent.* In *I Samuel,* Chapter XV, is an account of Saul's disobedience and punishment. The choosing of Saul to be king is described in *I Samuel,* Chapters IX and X.

292. *Sabaoth.* The word means "hosts" and is ordinarily used in the phrase "The Lord of hosts." It represents the omnipotence of God.

303. *Nor leave up nor down,* etc. At the end of stanza XV, the thought that had come to David was that God had proved supreme in all the ways in which a human being could test knowledge and power, but that in the one way of love the creature might surpass the Creator. At line 302 he has come to believe in the infinitude of God's love as well as in the infinitude of His power. It is interesting to note that George Eliot in *Silas Marner* gives to ignorant Dolly Winthrop an experience and a philosophy of life almost identical with those of Browning's David.

307-312. A prophecy of the revelation of the divine in the human, the coming of God in the person of Christ. It is the human in the divine that men seek and love. In the Old Testament days such an idea, though foretold and longed for, could be but vaguely conceived except in moments of especial insight in the minds of poet-prophets like David. Mr. Herford (*Robert Browning,* p. 120) says of this passage:

"David is occupied with no speculative question, but with the practical problem of saving a ruined soul; and neither logical ingenuity nor divine suggestion, but the inherent spiritual significance of the situation, urges his thought along the lonely path of prophecy. The love for the old King, which prompted him to try all the hidden paths of his soul in quest of healing, becomes a lighted torch by which he tracks out the meaning of the world and the still unrevealed purposes of God; until the energy of thought culminates in vision and the Christ stands full before his eyes."

313-335. In this stanza David represents all existences, good and evil spirits, all animals, all forms of nature, as stirred by the great news of the future manifestation of the love of God as shown in Christ.

MY STAR

A love lyric generally supposed to refer to Mrs. Browning.

4. *The angled spar.* A prism. In looking at a prism the colors one sees are determined by the point of view. The idea of the poem is amplified in "One Word More," stanzas XVI-XVIII.

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

The Campagna, a plain around the city of Rome, was in ancient times the seat of many cities; it is now dotted with ruins. "There is a solemnity and beauty about the Campagna entirely its own. To the reflective mind, this ghost of old Rome is full of suggestion; its vast, almost limitless extent as it seems to the traveler; its abundant herbage and floral wealth in early spring; its desolation, its crumbling monuments, and its evidences of a vanished civilization, fill the mind with a sweet sadness, which readily awakens the longing for the infinite spoken of in the poem." (Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia*, p. 553.)

6. *I touched a thought.* The elusive thought which he fancifully pursues from point to point in the surrounding landscape finds statement in lines 34-60. Of these lines Sharp (*Life of Browning*, p. 159) says, "There is a gulf which not the profoundest search can fathom, which not the strongest-winged love can overreach: the gulf of individuality. It is those who have loved most deeply who recognize most acutely this always pathetic and often terrifying isolation of the soul. None save the weak can believe in the absolute union of two spirits . . . No man, no poet assuredly, could love as Browning loved, and fail to be aware, often with vague anger and bitterness, no doubt, of this insuperable isolation even when spirit seemed to leap to spirit, in the touch of a kiss, in the evanishing sigh of some one or other exquisite moment."

IN THREE DAYS

"Another poem of waiting love is 'In Three Days.' And this has the spirit of a true love lyric in it. It reads like a personal thing; it breathes exaltation; it is quick, hurried, and thrilled. The delicate fears of chance and changes in the three days, or in the years to come, belong of right and nature to the waiting, and are subtly varied and condensed. It is, however, the thoughtful love of a man who can be metaphysical in love." (Stopford Brooke, *The Poetry of Robert Browning*, p. 253.)

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

Fano. This poem was written in the summer of 1848 after a visit of three days at Fano. It is addressed to Alfred Domett, one of Browning's warm friends, who was at that time in New Zealand on the Wairoa River. For a vivid description of him see Browning's "Waring." The picture at Fano, the details of which are fully brought out in the poem, has been reproduced in *Illustrations to Browning's Poems*, Part I, published by the Browning Society. Mrs. Browning (*Letters* I, 380) speaks of it as "a divine picture of Guercino's worth going all that way to see."

6. *Another child for tending.* With a longing for guidance and protection Browning imagines himself as a child under the guardianship of the angel.

16. *Like that child.* The child in the picture looks into the heavens. Browning would look only at the gracious face of the angel.

46. *My angel.* Cf. "My love," l. 54. Both refer to Mrs. Browning.

MEMORABILIA

Pauline (1832) has many references to Shelley; note especially lines 151-229; 1020-1031. Browning's "Essay on Shelley" appeared in 1852. "Memorabilia" was composed in 1853-4.

18-28. That later in life Browning "came to think unfavorably of Shelley as a man and to esteem him less highly as a poet" is shown by a letter written to Dr. Furnivall: "For myself I painfully contrast my notions of Shelley the *man* and Shelley, well, even the *poet*, with what they were sixty years ago." (Quoted by Mr. Dowden: *Robert Browning*, p. 10.) Mr. Browning declined an invitation to be president of the Shelley Society. For a discussion of Shelley's influence on Browning see *Poet-Lore*, Volume VII, January, 1895.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

Ratisbon, a city of Bavaria, was stormed by Napoleon in 1809. The story told in the poem is a true one, but its hero was a man, not a boy.

MY LAST DUCHESS

The original title in *Dramatic Lyrics*, 1842, was "Italy." It is a poem of the Italian Renaissance. Frà Pandolf and Claus of Innsbruck are, however, imaginary artists.

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

There is no known original for the story of Theocrite, but it is in accord with the Roman Catholic belief that angels watch over human beings and are interested in their affairs. In the last line is the fundamental lesson of the poem. Compare the thought of Pippa in the song "All service ranks the same with God." See Leigh Hunt's "King Robert of Sicily" (in *A Jar of Honey*, ch. vi.) and Longfellow's "King Robert of Sicily" (in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*) for an analogous legend.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

This poem was written to amuse little Willie Macready who was ill and wished a poem for which he could make illustrations. There are many legends that deal with the refusal of a reward promised to a magician for some stipulated service. Mr. Berdoe (*Browning Cyclopædia*, p. 339) says that the story given here is based on an account by Verstegan in his *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1634). Verstegan gives "Bunting" as the name of the piper; the town, as Hamelin in Brunswick on the Weser; and the mountain into which the children were led as the Köppenberg.

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS

When Mr. Browning was little more than a child he heard a woman one Guy Fawkes's Day sing in the street a strange song whose burden was "Following the Queen of the Gypsies, O!" The singular refrain haunted his memory for many years, and out of it was ultimately born this poem.

6-31. The Duke's medieval castle was apparently in Northern Germany, near the sea.

78. *Rough-foot merlin.* A species of hawk formerly trained to pursue other birds and game. A "falcon-lanner" is a long-tailed hawk. The word, when used in falconry, is restricted to the female hawk, which is larger than the male.

101. *Struck at himself.* Amazed at his own importance.

130. *Urochs.* The aurochs, the European bison, a species nearly extinct but preserved in the forests of Lithuania and the Caucasus. The "buffle" is the buffalo.

135-153. Compare this lady with the one in "My Last Duchess."

216. *Well, early in autumn.* In writing "The Flight of the Duchess" Browning was interrupted by a friend on some important business which temporarily drove the story out of the poet's mind. Some months after the publication of the first part in *Hood's Magazine*, April, 1845, he was staying at Bettisfield Park in Shropshire when someone in commenting on the early approach of winter said that already the deer had to break the ice in the pond. This chance phrase roused the poet's fancy, and when he returned home he completed his poem.

238. *St. Hubert.* Before his conversion St. Hubert had been passionately fond of hunting; hence he became the patron saint of hunters.

240-247. "The jerkin" or short coat; the "trunk-hose," or full breeches extending from the waist to the middle of the thigh; the big rimless hats with broad projections back and front and highly ornamented, were medieval articles of attire revived by the Duke for his "Middle Age" hunting party.

249. *Venerers, Prickers, and Verderers* are ancient names for huntsmen, horsemen, and preservers of venison.

263. *Horns wind a mort.* Horns announce the death of the stag; "at siege" probably means "brought to the appointed station." Possibly it means "at bay," in which case "wind a mort" must mean "announce that the death of the stag is imminent."

264. *Prick forth.* Spur her horse forth. She was to ride a jennet, a small Spanish horse known in the Middle Ages.

315. *Quince-tinct.* Tincture of quince was used as a cosmetic.

322. *Fifty-part canon.* "Mr. Browning explained that a 'canon, in music, is a piece wherein the subject is repeated in various keys, and being strictly obeyed in the repetition, becomes the canon, the imperative law to what follows.' Fifty of such parts would be indeed a notable peal; to manage three is enough of an achievement for a good musician." Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia*: page 180.

480. *The band-roll.* Her head was ornamented with a band on which were strung Persian coins.

533. *Gor-crow's flappers.* Wings of carrion crow.

581. *Like the spots.* Effects of phosphorescence.

845. *I have seen my little lady.* It is not clear where or when he saw her. Possibly he refers only to his revived memory of her.

852. *And . . . . . floats me.* This construction is what is known as the "ethical dative." The old servant merely says in jocose fashion that telling his story has made his blood course more rapidly and freely.

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

The Revival of Learning. The Revival of Learning, or the Renaissance, began as early as the tenth century. Its period of most rapid progress was from the twelfth century to the fifteenth. One phase of the interest in the revival of learning was the effort to restore Latin to its ancient purity. The word "grammarian" was more widely inclusive than now, meaning one who devoted himself to general learning. Of this poem Dr. Burton in "Renaissance Pictures in Browning" (*Poet-Lore,* Vol. x, pp. 60-76, No. 1, 1898) says: "I know of no lyric of the poet's more representative of his peculiar and virile strength than this, in that it makes vibrant and thoroughly emotional an apparently unemotional theme. In relation to the Renaissance, the revival of learning, the moral is the higher inspiration derived from the new wine of the classics, so that what in later times has cooled down too often to a dry-as-dust study of the husks of knowledge is shown to be, at the start, a veritable reveling in the delights of the fruit."

Mr. Stopford Brooke in *The Poetry of Browning,* p. 155, says, "This is the artist at work, and I doubt whether all the laborious prose written, in history and criticism, on the revival of learning, will ever express better than this short poem the inexhaustible thirst of the Renaissance in its pursuit of knowledge, or the enthusiasm of the pupils of a New Scholar for his desperate strife to know in a short life the very center of the universe."

3. *Leave we the common crofts.* As the procession starts up the hill they leave behind them the small farms and little villages of the plain.

8. *Rock-row.* Day is just breaking over the rocky summits of the mountains.

9. *There, man's thought.* The smoking crater of a volcano, described as a censer from which rise the fumes of incense, portends an outbreak of subterranean fire. The speaker fancifully considers this an appropriate spot in which to bury the scholar whose passionate eagerness of thought chafed continually against the bounds of custom and ignorance and human weakness.

14. *Sepulture.* Pronounced here, *sepúlture.* A burial place or tomb.

25. *Step to a tune.* Here and in various other places, as lines 41, 73, 76, etc., are directions to the pallbearers.

34. *Lyric Apollo.* The god Apollo was the ideal of manly beauty. The Grammarian was, it seems, endowed with rare charm of face and form.

35. *Long he lived nameless.* Youth had passed before the Grammarian really entered upon his quest for knowledge. But he did not despair. His vanishing of youth was but a signal to "leave play for work."

45. *Grappled with the world.* The world of knowledge, especially ancient learning, which was recovered slowly and with difficulty.

49. *Theirs.* He wishes to study the "shaping" or writings of poets and sages.

50. *Gowned.* Put on the scholastic gown.

64. *Queasy.* Sick at the stomach. He could not get knowledge enough to make him feel a distaste for it.

65-68. "It" in l. 66 refers to l. 67. The "it" in l. 68 refers to "such a life," l. 65.

70. *Fancy the fabric.* Under the figure of making a complete plan before beginning to build a house, he describes the Grammarian's purpose to know the whole scheme of life before he lived out any part of it.

86. *Calculus* and *tussis* (l. 88) are diseases, the stone and bronchitis, that attacked him.

95. *Soul-hydroptic.* "Hydroptic" is a rare word for "thirsty."

103. *God's task,* etc. He neglected the body, magnified the mind, and believed that the full realization of his aspirations would come in "the heavenly period."

113. *That low man.* This comparison between the "low man" and the "high man" could be effectively illustrated from "Andrea del Sarto." Andrea is the "low man" who with his skillful hand "goes on adding one to one" till he attains his "hundred," or excellence of technique. But the other painters, the ones with the "truer light of God" in them, reach the heaven above and take their place there although what they see transcends the power of their art to tell. They miss the "unit" of an adequate technique, but they gain the "million" of spiritual insight.

129. *Hoti . . . Oun . . . De.* Points in Greek grammar concerning which there was much learned discussion.

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME"

Mrs. Orr (*Handbook of Browning's Works,* p. 274) says of this poem: "We can connect no idea of definite pursuit or attainment with a series of facts so dream-like and so disjointed: still less extract from it a definite moral; and we are reduced to taking the poem as a simple work of fancy, built up of picturesque impressions which have, separately or collectively, produced themselves in the author's mind." And she adds in a note: "I may venture to state that these picturesque materials included a tower which Mr. Browning once saw in the Carrara Mountains, a painting which caught his eye years later in Paris; and the figure of a horse in the tapestry in his own drawing-room—welded together in the remembrance of the

line from *'King Lear,'* which forms the heading of the poem." The possible allegorical signification of the poem has been the subject of much, and often of singularly futile discussion. Dr. Furnivall said he had asked Browning if it was an allegory, and in answer had on three separate occasions received an emphatic statement that it was simply a dramatic creation called forth by a line of Shakspere's. (Porter-Clarke, *Study Programmes,* p. 406.) Yet allegorical interpretations continue to be made. According to one line of interpretation the pilgrim is a "truth-seeker, misdirected by the lying spirit" (the hoary cripple), and when he blows the slug-horn it is as a warning to others that he has failed in his quest, and that the way to the dark tower is the way of destruction and death. (Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia,* p. 105) According to other readings of the tale the blast which the pilgrim blows at the end of his quest is one of "spiritual victory and incitement to others." When the Rev. John S. Chadwick visited the poet and asked him if constancy to an ideal—"He that endureth to the end shall be saved"—was not a sufficient understanding of the central purpose of the poem, Browning said: "Yes, just about that." With constancy to an ideal as the central purpose, the details of this poem, without being minutely interpreted, may yet serve as a representation of the depression, the hopelessness, the dullness and deadness of soul, the doubt and terror even of the man who travels the last stages of a difficult journey to a long-sought but unknown goal. His victory consists in the unfaltering persistence of his search. The "squat tower," when he reaches it, is prosaic and ugly, but finding it is after all not the essential point. The essential element of his success is that, encircled by the last temptations to despair, he holds heart and brain steady, and carries out his quest to its last detail. (See an article in *The Critic,* May 3, 1886, by Mr. Arlo Bates, in opposition to any definite allegory. Mr. Nettleship in *Robert Browning* [p. 89] devotes a chapter to a paraphrase and an allegorical explanation.)

Mr. Herford (*Life of Browning,* p. 94) calls the poem "a great romantic legend" and emphasizes its intensity and boldness of invention. He compares its "horror-world" with that of Coleridge in "The Ancient Mariner." "What 'The Ancient Mariner' is in the poetry of the mysterious terrors and splendors of the sea, that 'Childe Roland' is in the poetry of bodeful horror, of haunted desolation, of waste and plague, ragged distortion, and rotting ugliness in landscape. The Childe, like the Mariner, advances through an atmosphere and scenery of steadily gathering menace."

Mr. Chesterton says of the scenery: "It is . . . the poetry of the shabby and hungry aspect of the earth itself. Daring poets who wished to escape from the conventional gardens and orchards had long been in the habit of celebrating the poetry of rugged and gloomy landscapes, but Browning is not content with this. He insists on celebrating the poetry of mean landscapes. That sense of scrubbiness in nature, as of a man unshaved, had never been conveyed with this enthusiasm and primeval gusto before." (*Robert Browning,* p. 159.)

HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY

This poem is the story of an obscure poet in the Spanish city of Valladolid. It brings out his actual life and the townfolk's misinterpretations of it. Reports multiply upon themselves and take new meanings till the harmless poet is generally accounted the King's spy and the real agent of all royal edicts, the town's master, in fact. The interest which, as a poet, he takes in all manifestations of life is popularly supposed to be the alertness of a secret agent of the government. The reams of poetry he writes are transformed into letters of information to the King. Rumor translates the poet's perfectly decent, regular, meager life into secret sybaritic extravagances.

7. *Though none did.* His suit had once been fashionable, but, though still serviceable, was of a sort no longer worn by his fellow townsmen.

25. *The coffee-roaster's brazier.* The coffee is roasted in a dish that is made to revolve over the coals in an open pan or basin.

74. *Beyond the Jewry.* Beyond the Jew's quarter, a squalid portion of the city.

90. *The Corregidor.* The Spanish title for a magistrate.

104. *Here had been.* The poet, misconceived by his generation, poor, and lonely, has yet a great spiritual personality. Men see the old coat. God, the King for whom he works, sees his real nature; hence heavenly guards attend when this man comes to die.

115. *The Prado.* The chief fashionable promenade of Madrid.

FRA LIPPO LIPPI

Fra Lippo Lippi was born in Florence in 1406. See Vasari's *Lives of the Painters* for the account of his life on which Browning based his poem. (Vasari's account is quoted in Cooke's *Browning Guide Book.*)

2. *You need not clap your torches.* Throughout this lively dramatic monologue it is important to mark every indication of the words or gestures of the auditors; for instance, in lines 13, 18, 26, etc.

7. *The Carmine.* Fra Lippo Lippi's entrance into the monastery of the friars del Carmine and his education there are described later in the poem. He lived there till he was twenty-six. He had no vocation for the life of a monk and wished to devote himself to painting. He apparently left the monastery on good terms with the friars.

17. *Master—a Cosimo of the Medici.* Cosimo de Medici (1389-1464) was a rich Florentine banker and statesman. He was a magnificent patron of art and literature. The old Medici palace (l. 17), now known as *Palazzo Riccardi,* is on the corner of the *Via Cavour* and the *Via Gori.* The church of *San Lorenzo* (the "Saint Laurence" of l. 67) is a short distance farther west on the Via Gori.

22. *Pick up a manner.* The painter protests against the rough usage to which he has been subjected.

23. *Zooks.* An interjection formerly written "gadzooks." *Pilchards* are a common cheap fish of the Mediterranean and are taken in seines.

28. *Quarter-florin.* The florin was a gold coin of Florence. It was first struck off in the twelfth century and was called a florin because it had a flower stamped on one side.

31. *I'd like his face.* The painter cannot look upon the crowd of men about him without seeing faces he would like to draw. One man would do as a model for Judas. Another would do well in a picture Fra Lippo's imagination quickly conjures up of a slave holding the head of John the Baptist by the hair. In Fra Lippo's real picture of the beheading of John the Baptist the head is brought in by Salome, the daughter of Herodias, on a great platter.

46. *Carnival.* The days preceding Lent. A period marked by much gaiety, street revelry, masking, etc.

53. *Flower o' the broom.* These flower songs, called *stornelli,* are improvised by the peasants at their work. "The *stornelli* consists of three lines. The first line usually contains the name of a flower which sets the rhyme and is five syllables long. Then the love theme is told in two lines of eleven syllables each, agreeing by rhyme, assonance, or repetition with the first." (Porter and Clarke note in Camberwell Edition.) Browning does not follow the model strictly.

73. *Jerome.* St. Jerome was one of the Fathers of the Christian Church. During a part of his early life he was given up to worldly pleasures, and for this he did penance by living for a number of years in a cave in a desert region. The penitent St. Jerome was a popular devotional subject in early Christian art. "The scene is generally a wild rocky solitude; St. Jerome, half-naked, emaciated, with matted hair and beard, is seen on his knees before a crucifix, beating his breast with a stone." (Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art,* I, 308.)

80. *What am I a beast for?* If you had happened, says Fra Lippo, to catch Cosimo in a frolic like this, of course you would have said nothing; but you think a monk is a beast if he indulges in these nocturnal pleasures. Yet why should the fact that I break monastic rules make you consider me a beast? Just let me tell you how I happened to become a monk.

83. *I starved there.* Note the vivid picture of the life of a street gamin here and in lines 112-126.

88. *Aunt Lapaccia.* Vasari says, "The child was for some time under the care of a certain Mona Lapaccia, his aunt, who brought him up with very great difficulty till he had attained his eighth year, when, being no longer able to support the burden of his maintenance, she placed him in the above-named convent of the Carmelites." "Trussed," means "firmly seized."

117. *Which gentlemen,* etc. Gentlemen clad in fine ecclesiastical robes walk in the religious procession and carry tall wax candles or torches; the drippings from these candles the street-urchin wishes to catch in order to sell them again, but it is against the law, and the fine gentlemen

if not kindly disposed may call in the magistrates ("The Eight") and have the boy whipped.

130. *The antiphonary's marge.* He scrawled his sketches on the margins of the book used by the choir, and he made faces out of the notes, which were then square with long stems.

139. *We Carmelites.* The three orders of monks, the Carmelites, the Camaldolese, and the Dominicans (called "Preaching Brothers" by Pope Innocent III) owned various monasteries and churches, and were each ambitious to possess the greatest sacred paintings.

145-163. These lines describe the different figures painted on the wall by Fra Lippo when the prior bade him "daub away." The monks dressed in black or white according to the garb of their orders; the old women waiting to confess small thefts; the row of admiring little children gazing at a bearded fellow, a murderer who, still breathing hard with the run that has brought him in safety to the altar steps, defies the "white anger" of his victim's son, who has followed him into the church; the girl who loves the brute of a murderer, and brings him flowers, food, and her earrings to aid him when he shall escape—all these are painted on the wall. Then the young artist took down the ladder by means of which he had reached the bit of cloister-wall where he had been recording his observations of life, and called the monks to see.

156. *Whose sad face.* The purpose of Christ's suffering ("passion") on the cross was to bring love into the world, but after a thousand years of his teaching his image looks down upon theft, anger, murder.

172. *My triumph's straw-fire.* Lippo's triumph was as short-lived as a fire of straw. The monks were delighted with the realism of the painting, but when the Prior and the critics came they declared that such "homage to the perishable clay" was a mere "devil's game." The business of the painter, they said, was to ignore the body and paint the soul.

184. *Man's soul.* Note the difficulty the Prior experiences when he tries to describe the "soul" he wishes the artist to paint. Lines 185-186 represent an old superstition.

189-198. In contrast to the homely realism of Fra Lippo's picture of ordinary people are the idealism, the religious symbolism, of the pictures of Giotto, a painter a century and a half earlier than Fra Lippo, and the greatest master of the early school of Italian art.

198-214. An exposition of Fra Lippo's idea of painting. He says that it is nonsense to ignore the body in order to make the soul preëminent, that the painter should go a "double step" and paint both body and soul. He may make the face of a girl as lovely and life-like as possible, and at the same time show her soul in her face.

215-220. A defense of the value of beauty for its own sake. Cf. Keats, "Ode to a Grecian Urn," and the beginning of his "Endymion." Fra Lippo Lippi has been long out of convent limitations, but he cannot forget how certain the monks were that he had chosen the wrong path, and that he could never equal the great painter, Fra Angelico (1389-1455), who, kneeling

in adoration, painted lovely saints and angels, nor even Lorenzo Monaca, a Florentine painter with the same tendencies as Angelico.

257. *Out at grass.* *Grass* in this passage stands for enjoyment of life as opposed to asceticism.

276. *Guidi.* Tommaso Guidi, ordinarily known as Masaccio, or Tomassacio, Slovenly or Hulking Tom. Browning followed good authority in making Masaccio a pupil of Fra Lippo Lippi, but in point of fact he was probably the master whose works Fra Lippo studied. Lübke (*History of Art* II, 207) says of Guidi: "In his exceedingly short life he rapidly traversed the various stages of development of earlier art, and pressed on with a bold confidence to a greatness and power of vision which have rendered his works the characteristic ones of an epoch, and his example a decisive influence in all the art of the fifteenth century . . . Almost every master in the fifteenth century . . . studied these great works and learned from them. One of the first of these masters was Fra Lippo Lippi." The important point is that Fra Lippo and Masaccio were both pioneers in the new art which took infinite pains in the representation of the body. Masaccio is said to have been the first Italian artist to paint a nude figure.

323. *A Saint Laurence . . . at Prato.* Prato a town near Florence, attracted many artists in the fifteenth century, so that one finds there many specimens of Early Renaissance painting. Some of the most important of Fra Lippo Lippi's large works are in the Cathedral at Prato.

326-334. The people have been so enraged at the slaves who are pictured as assisting in the martyrdom of St. Laurence that the faces of these slaves have been scratched from the wall. The monks think the picture a huge success because it has thus roused religious zeal.

339. *Chianti wine.* A famous wine named from Chianti, a mountain group near Siena, Italy.

346. *Sant Ambrogio's.* The picture described here is the "Coronation of the Virgin" now in the *Accademia delle Belle Arti* of Florence. *Sant' Ambrogio* is a Florentine church named after St. Ambrose, a Bishop of Milan.

354. *St. John.* The Baptist. Note the reference to camel's hair raiment in l. 375. *The Battistero,* the original cathedral of Florence, was dedicated to John the Baptist. Some say the reliefs on one of its famous bronze doors represent scenes from his life. To this church all children born in Florence are brought to be baptized.

357. *Job.* See *Job* i, 1.

360. *Up shall come.* Artists not infrequently painted their own portraits in their pictures. In the "Coronation of the Virgin" Fra Lippo's round tonsured head is seen in the lower right hand corner.

377. *Iste perfecit opus.* "This one did the work."

381. *Hot cockles.* An old English game in which a blind-folded player tries to guess the names of those who touch or strike him.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

Andrea del Sarto's father was a tailor (*Sarto*) and so the son was nicknamed "The Tailor's Andrew." He was born in 1486. His first paintings were seven frescoes in the Church of the Annunziata in Florence. They were "marvelous productions for a youth who was little over twenty, and remain Andrea's most charming and attractive works." (Julia Cartwright, *The Painters of Florence.*) Algernon Charles Swinburne in *Essays and Studies* ("Notes and Designs on the Old Masters at Florence") says of Andrea's early paintings in comparison with his later work: "These are the first fruits of his flowering manhood, when the bright and buoyant genius in him had free play and large delight in its handiwork; when the fresh interest of invention was still his, and the dramatic sense, the pleasure in the play of life, the power of motion and variety; before the old strength of sight and of flight had passed from weary wing and clouding eye, the old pride and energy of enjoyment had gone out of hand and heart.

"How the change fell upon him, and how it wrought, anyone may see who compares his later with his earlier work . . . The time came when another than Salome [referring to Andrea del Sarto's picture of Salome dancing before Herod] was to dance before the eyes of the painter; and she required of him the head of no man, but his own soul; and he paid the forfeit into her hands . . . In Mr. Browning's noblest poem—his noblest, it seems to me—the whole tragedy is distilled into the right words, the whole man raised up and reclothed with flesh. One point only is but lightly touched upon—missed it could not be by an eye so sharp and skillful—the effect upon his art of the poisonous solvent of love. How his life was corroded by it, and his soul burnt into dead ashes we are shown in full, but we are not shown in full what as a painter he was before, what as a painter he might have been without it."

The bare facts of this poem are taken from Vasari's *Lives of the Painters.* Vasari, once a pupil of Andrea del Sarto, hated Lucrezia and in his account spared no details of her evil influence. Later chronicles give a somewhat more favorable view of her, but the main facts of the story remain undisputed. Of the origin of the poem, Mrs. Andrew Crosse (see "John Kenyon and His Friends" in *Temple Bar Magazine,* April, 1900) writes: "When the Brownings were living in Florence, Kenyon had begged them to procure him a copy of the portrait in the Pitti of Andrea del Sarto and his wife. Mr. Browning was unable to get the copy made with any promise of satisfaction, and so wrote the exquisite poem of Andrea del Sarto—and sent it to Kenyon!" For another literary presentation of Andrea del Sarto see *Andre del Sarto,* a play by Alfred de Musset.

15. *Fiesole.* A town on a hill above the Arno about three miles northwest of Florence. See *Pippa Passes.*

40. *We are in God's hand.* Andrea's fatalistic view of life aids him in escaping the poignancy of remorse.

65. *The Legate's talk.* The representative of the Pope praised Andrea's work. For the high esteem accorded Andrea when he was in Paris at the court of Francis I, see lines 149-161.

82. *This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand.* Eugene Muntz (quoted in *Masters of Art* series, in the number entitled "Andrea del Sarto") says of Andrea's skill: "No painter has excelled him in the rendering of flesh . . . No painter, moreover, has surpassed him in his grasp of the infinite resources of the palette. All the secrets of richness, softness, and *morbidezza,* all the mysteries of *pastoso* and *sfumato* were his. It is not then as a technician that we must deny Andrea del Sarto the right to rank with the very greatest. It is as an artist (using the word in its highest sense) that he falls below them, for he was lacking in the loftier qualities of imagination, sentiment, and, worst of all, conviction." *Histoire de l'Art pendent la Renaissance.*

93. *Morello.* A mountain of the Apennines and visible from Florence.

98. *Or what's a heaven for.* According to Browning's theory, perfection gained and rested in means stagnation. Aspiration toward the unattainable is the condition of growth. The artist who can satisfy himself with such themes as can be completely expressed by his art, is on a low level of experience and attainment.

105. *The Urbinate.* Raphael Sanzio of Urbino, one of the greatest of Italian painters. He died in 1520; hence the date of this poem is supposed to be 1525.

136. *Agnolo.* Michael Agnolo (less correctly, Angelo), 1475-1566, great both as sculptor and painter.

149. *Francis.* Francis I of France was a patron of the arts. When Andrea was thirty-two and had been married five years, King Francis sent for him to come to Fontainebleau, the most sumptuous of the French royal palaces. Andrea greatly enjoyed the splendor and hospitality of the French court, and he was happy in his successful work, when Lucrezia called him home. He obtained a vacation of two months and took with him money with which to make purchases for the French king. This money he used to buy a house for Lucrezia.

241. *Scudi.* Italian coins worth about ninety-six cents each.

261. *Four great walls. Revelation,* XXI, 15-17.

263. *Leonardo.* Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), one of the greatest of Italian painters.

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT ST. PRAXED'S CHURCH

There is an old church in Rome named in honor of St. Praxed or Praxedes. The Bishop's Tomb, however, "is entirely fictitious, although something which is made to stand for it is now shown to credulous sightseers." (Mrs. Orr, *Handbook to Robert Browning's Works,* p. 247.)

Ruskin says of this poem: "Robert Browning is unerring in every sentence he writes of the Middle Ages—always vital, right, and profound,

so that in the matter of art, with which we are specially concerned, there is hardly a principle connected with the medieval temper that he has not struck upon in these seemingly careless and too rugged lines of his . . . I know no other piece of modern English prose or poetry in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit—its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of luxury, and of good Latin. It is nearly all that I have said of the central Renaissance, in thirty pages of 'The Stones of Venice,' put into as many lines, Browning's also being the antecedent work." (*Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, pp. 337-9.) "It was inevitable that the great period of the Renaissance should produce men of the type of the Bishop of St. Praxed; it would be grossly unfair to set him down as the type of the churchmen of his time." Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia*, p. 81.

1. *Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity.* Cf. ll. 8-9, 51-52, as illustrative of the religious professionalism of the Bishop's talk. He drops into the ecclesiastical conception of life and death, and into the phraseology of his order.

21. *Epistle-side.* The right-hand side facing the altar, where the epistle is read by the priest acting as celebrant, the gospel being read from the other side by the priest acting as assistant.

29. *Peach-blossom marble.* This rosy marble delights the Bishop as much as the pale cheap onion-stone offends him. The lapis-lazuli, a rich blue stone (l. 42), the antique-black (Nero-antico), a rare black marble (l. 34), the beautiful green jasper (l. 68), the elaborate carving planned for the bronze frieze (l. 56-62, 106-111), show not only that the Bishop covets what is costly, but that his highly cultivated taste knows real beauty.

34. *That conflagration.* The eagerness of the Bishop for the lump of the lapis-lazuli has made him steal even from his own church.

41. *Olive-frail.* A basket made of rushes, used for packing olives.

57. *Those Pans and Nymphs.* The underlying paganism of the Bishop produces a strangely incongruous mixture on his tomb—the Savior, St. Praxed, Moses, Pan, and the Nymphs.

58. *Thyrsus.* The ivy-coiled staff or spear stuck in a pine-cone, symbol of the Bacchic orgy.

66. *Travertine.* A white limestone, the name being a corruption of Tiburninus, from Tibur, now Tivoli, near Rome, whence this stone comes.

77. *Choice Latin.* The Bishop's scholarship was as good as his taste in marbles. The *Elucescebat* ("he was illustrious") of l. 99 Browning called "dog-latin" and he called "Ulpian, the golden jurist, a copper latinist." (See letter to D. G. Rossetti. Quoted by A. J. George, *Select Poems of Browning*, p. 366.) Tully's Latin was Cicero's (Marcus Tullius Cicero), the purest classic style. The Grammarian in "The Grammarian's Funeral" was equally intense on a point of elegance or correctness in the ancient languages.

80-84. The Bishop rejoices in all that has to do with the forms and

ceremonies of the church. Note in ll. 119-121 his insistence on form and order.

91. *Strange thoughts.* From this point on the Bishop's mind seems to wander.

108. *A visor and a Term.* The visor is a mask. A term is any bust or half-statue not placed upon but incorporated with, and as it were immediately springing out of, the square pillar which serves as its pedestal.

CLEON

The quotation preceding this poem is from *Acts* xvii, 28, and is, in full, "'As certain also of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.'" The poet thus referred to by Paul was Aratus, a Greek poet from Tarsus, Paul's own city. The Cleon and Protus of Browning's poem are not historical characters, but they are representative of the tone of thought and inquiry on the part of the Greek philosophers at the time of Paul. Lines 1-158 give an account of the achievements of Cleon, a man who has attained eminence in the various realms of poetry, philosophy, painting, and sculpture. He is not in any one accomplishment equal to the great poets, musicians, or artists of the past, and yet he represents progress because he is able to enter into sympathy with the great achievements in all these realms.

1. *Sprinkled isles.* Presumably the Sporades, the "scattered isles."

4. *Protus in his Tyranny.* Free government [in Greece] having superseded the old hereditary sovereignties, all who obtained absolute power in a state were called tyrants, or rather despots; for the term indicates the irregular way in which the power was given rather than the way in which it was exercised. Tyrants might be mild in exercise of authority, and, like Protus, liberal in their patronage of the arts.

8. *Gift after gift.* Protus, a patron of the arts, shows his appreciation of the work of Cleon by many royal gifts. Chief among the slaves, black and white, sent by Protus, is one white woman in a bright yellow wool robe, who is especially commissioned to present a beautiful cup. Lines 136-8 are also descriptive of this girl.

41. *Zeus.* The chief of the Grecian gods.

47. *That epos.* An epic poem by Cleon engraved on golden plates.

51. *The image of the sun-god on the phare.* Cleon has made a statue of Apollo for a lighthouse. *Phare* is from the island of Pharos where there was a famous lighthouse.

53. *The Pœcile.* The Portico of Athens painted with battle pictures by Polygnotus.

60. *For music.* "In Greek music the scales were called moods or modes and were subject to great variation in the arrangement of tones and semitones." (Porter-Clarke, note in Camberwell edition.)

82. *The checkered pavement.* This pavement of black and white marble in an elaborate pattern of various sorts of four-sided figures was a gift to Cleon from his own nation.

100-112. The similitude is involved but fairly clear. The water that touches the sphere here and there, one point at a time, as the sphere is revolved, represents the power of great geniuses who, each at one point, have reached great heights. The air that fills the sphere represents the composite modern mind that synthesizes the parts into a great whole.

132. *Drupe.* Any stone-fruit. The contrast is between the wild plum and the cultivated plum.

139. *Homer.* The poet to whom very ancient tradition assigns the authorship of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. *Terpander,* the father of Greek music, flourished about 700-650 B. C. Phidias, a famous Athenian sculptor, lived 500-432 B. C. His friend was Pericles, the ruler of Athens.

304. *Sappho.* A Greek poetess. She wrote about 600 B. C.

305. *Æschylus,* a Greek tragic poet, 525-456 B. C.

340. *Paulus.* Paul died about 64 A. D. The date of this poem is therefore about the last quarter of the first century A. D. Cleon had heard so vaguely about the Christian religion that he did not know the difference between Christ and Paul. The "doctrine" spoken of in the last line was the Christian teaching concerning immortality. The Greek, Cleon, had felt a longing to believe in another existence in which man would have unlimited capability for joy, but Zeus had revealed no such doctrine, and the cultivated Greek was not ready to receive it at the hands of a man like Paul.

ONE WORD MORE

A poem directly addressed to Mrs. Browning. It was originally appended to the collection of Poems called *Men and Women.* For other tributes by great poets to their wives see Wordsworth's "She was a phantom of delight," and "O dearer far than life and light are dear;" and Tennyson's "Dear, near and true." Mrs. Browning's love for her husband had found passionate expression in *Sonnets from the Portuguese.*

2. *Naming me.* Giving a name to to the volume for me.

5-31. Raphael's "lady of the sonnets" was Margharita (La Fornarina), the baker's daughter, whose likeness appears in several of his most celebrated pictures. The Madonnas enumerated in ll. 22-25 are the Sistine Madonna, now in the Dresden Gallery; the Madonna di Foligno, so called because it had been painted as a votive offering for Sigismund Corti of Foligno; the Madonna del Granduca (Petti Palace, Florence) in which the Madonna is represented as appearing to a votary in a vision; and probably the Madonna called La Belle Jardiniere in the Louvre. There is no evidence that Raphael wrote more than one sonnet, or three at most. The "century of sonnets" attributed to him by Browning "is probably an example of poetical license." The volume Guido Reni treasured and left to his heir was a volume with a hundred designs by Raphael. (Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia,* p. 297.)

32-57. Dante's chief work was his great poem, the *Inferno,* in which were caustic sketches of evil men of various sorts. The sketch in the lines 35-41 is made up from two descriptions (*Inferno,* Cantos 32, 33) of traitors, the one to his country, the other to a familiar friend. The second of these was still alive when Dante wrote (W. M. Rossetti, *Academy,* Jan. 10, 1891). Beatrice, or Bice, was the woman Dante loved. It was on the first anniversary of her death that he began to draw the angel. Dante tells of this in the *Vita Nuovo,* xxxv, and there describes the interruption of the "people of importance."

63-4. To Raphael painting is an art that has become his nature; to Dante, poetry is an art that has become his nature. But this one time, for the woman of his love, each chooses the art in which he may have some natural skill but for which he has had no technical training.

73-108. The "artist's sorrow" as contrasted with the "man's joy" is illustrated from the experiences of Moses in conducting the children of Israel out of Egypt (*Exodus* xvii). His achievement savors of disrelish because of the grumbling unbelief of the people, and because of the ungracious irritation into which he has been betrayed even when taxing his God-given power to the utmost in their behalf. He must hold steadily to his majesty as a prophet or he cannot control and so serve the crowd, but he covets the man's joy of doing supreme service to the woman whom he loves.

97. *Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance. Exodus* xix, 9, 16; xxxiv, 30.

101. *Jethro's daughter.* Zipporah, the wife of Moses. *Exodus* ii, 16, 21,

121. *He who works in fresco.* The fresco painter uses large free strokes of the brush. But in order to give something distinctive to the lady of his love he will try painting tiny illuminations on the margins of her missal.

143. *Be how I speak.* That is, he usually writes dramatically, giving the experience and uttering the words of the characters he has created, such as the Arab physician, Karshish; the Greek Cleon; Norbert, the man whom the Queen loved in "In a Balcony"; the painter, Fra Lippo Lippi; the heroic pilgrim, Childe Roland; the painter, Andrea del Sarto. But now, for once, he speaks in his own person, directly to the woman he loves.

144-156. In Florence they had seen the new moon, a mere crescent over the hill Fiesole, and had watched its growth till it hung, round and full, over the church of San Miniato. Now, in London, the moon is in its last quarter.

163. *Zoroaster.* Founder of the Irano-Persian religion, the chief god of which, Varuna, was the god of light and of the illuminated night-heaven.

164. *Galileo.* A celebrated Italian astronomer (1564-1642).

165. *Dumb to Homer.* Homer celebrated the moon in the "Hymn to Diana." Keats wrote much about the moon and the hero of his poem "Endymion" was represented as in love with the moon.

172-179. See *Exodus* xxiv.

ABT VOGLER

Abbé (or Abt) Vogler (1749-1814) was a Catholic priest well known a century ago as an organist and a composer. He founded three schools of music, one at Mannheim, one at Stockholm, and one at Darmstadt. He was especially noted for his organ recitals, as many as 7000 tickets having been sold for a single recital in Amsterdam. In 1798 it was said that he had then given over a thousand organ concerts. His knowledge of acoustics and his consequent skill in combining the stops enabled him to bring much power and variety from organs with fewer pipes than were generally considered necessary. The remodeling and simplification of organs was one of his most eagerly pursued activities. He not only rearranged the pipes, but he introduced free reeds. Through some skillful Swedish organ-builders he was at last enabled to have an organ small enough to be portable and constructed according to his ideas. This he called an "orchestrion." Of Vogler's power as an organist Rinck says, "His organ playing was grand, effective in the utmost degree." It was, however, when he was improvising that his power was most astonishing. Once at a musical soirée Vogler and Beethoven extemporized alternately, each giving the other a theme, and Gansbacher records the pitch of enthusiasm to which he was roused by Voglers masterly playing. Three of Voglers most famous pupils at Darmstadt were Meyerbeer, Gansbacher, and Carl Maria von Weber. The last of these gives an attractive picture of the musician extemporizing in the old church at Darmstadt. "Never," says Weber, "did Vogler in his extemporization drink more deeply at the source of all beauty, than when before his three dear boys, as he liked to call us, he drew from the organ angelic voices and word of thunder." Browning's poem records the experiences of the musician in one of these moods of rapturous creation.

The argument of the poem is thus given by Mr. Stopford Brooke in *The Poetry of Robert Browning*, page 149:

"When Solomon pronounced the Name of God, all the spirits, good and bad, assembled to do His will and build His palace. And when I, Abt Vogler, touched the keys, I called the Spirits of Sound to me, and they have built my palace of music; and to inhabit it all the Great Dead came back till in the vision I made a perfect music. Nay, for a moment, I touched in it the infinite perfection; but now it is gone; I cannot bring it back. Had I painted it, had I written it, I might have explained it. But in music out of the sounds something emerges which is above the sounds, and that ineffable thing I touched and lost. I took the well-known sounds of earth, and out of them came a fourth sound, nay not a sound—but a star. This was a flash of God's will which opened the Eternal to me for a moment; and I shall find it again in the eternal life. Therefore, from the achievement of earth and the failure of it, I turn to God, and in Him I see that every image, thought, impulse, and dream of knowledge or beauty—which, coming whence we know not, flit before us in human life, breathe for a moment, and then depart; which, like my music,

build a sudden palace in imagination; which abide for an instant and dissolve, but which memory and hope retain as a ground of aspiration—are not lost to us though they seem to die in their immediate passage. Their music has its home in the Will of God and we shall find them completed there."

3. *Solomon.* In Jewish legend it is said that Solomon had power over angels and demons through a seal on which "the most great name of God was engraved."

13. *And one would bury his brow.* This description of the foundations of the palace is not unlike Milton's account of the work of the fallen angels in building the palace in hell. (*Paradise Lost*, I, 170.) That "fabric huge" was as magical in its construction as the palace of Abt Vogler, for, though it was not built by music, it

> "Rose like an exhalation with the sound
> Of Dulcet Symphonies and voices sweet."

16. *Nether Springs.* Remotest origins.

23. *Rome's dome.* The illumination of St. Peter's was formerly one of the customary spectacles on the evening of Easter Sunday. "At Ave-Maria we drove to Piazza of St. Peter's. The lighting of the lanternoni, or large paper lanterns, each of which looks like a globe of ethereal fire, had been going on for an hour, and by the time we arrived there was nearly completed . . . The whole of this immense church—its columns, capitals, cornices, and pediments—the beautiful swell of the lofty dome . . . all were designed in lines of fire, and the vast sweep of the circling colonnades . . . was resplendent with the same beautiful light." (C. A. Eaton, *Rome in the Nineteenth Century*, II, 208.)

23. *Space to spire.* From the wide opening between the colonnades to the cross on the top of the lantern surmounting the dome.

34. *Protoplast.* Used apparently for protoplasm, a substance constituting the physical basis of life in all plants and animals.

39. Into his musical palace came the wonderful Dead in a glorified form, and also Presences fresh from the Protoplast, while, for the moment, he himself in the ardor of musical creation felt himself raised to the level of these exalted ones.

53. *Consider it well.* On the mystery of musical creation and on its permanence see Cardinal Newman's sermon on "The Theory of Development in Christian Doctrine." (Quoted in part, in Berdoe's *Browning Cyclopædia.*)

57. *Palace of music.* Cf. the description of the glowing banquet-room in Keats's "Lamia":

> "A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
> Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
> Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might perish."

The damsel with the dulcimer in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" sings of Mount Abora, and the poet says:

> "Could I revive within me
> Her sympathy and song
> To such a deep delight 'twould win me
> That with music loud and long
> I would build that dome in air,
> That sunny dome, those caves of ice!
> And all who heard should see them there."

In Tennyson's "Gareth and Lynette" (l. 270), Merlin says to Gareth in describing Camelot,

> "For and ye heard a music, like enow
> They are building still, seeing the city is built
> To music, therefore never built at all,
> And therefore built forever."

There are also more ancient accounts of this union of music and architecture. Amphion, King of Thebes, played on his lyre till the stones moved of their own accord into the wall he was building. When King Laomedan built the walls of Troy, Apollo's lyre did similar service to that of Amphion in Thebes. For an interesting account of "Voice Figures" see *The Century Magazine,* May 1891.

64. *What was, shall be.* For this faith in the actual permanence of what seemed so evanescent, compare Adelaide Procter's "Lost Chord."

69. *There shall never be one lost good.* Whatever of good has existed must always exist. Evil, being self-destructive, finally "is null, is naught." This is the Hegelian doctrine. Walt Whitman said on reading Hegel, "Roaming in thought over the Universe I saw the little that is Good steadily hastening towards immortality. And the vast all that is called Evil I saw hastening to merge itself and become lost and dead." (Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia,* page 40.)

81. *A triumph's evidence.* Failure in high heroic attempts seems to point forward to some more favorable future where noble effort is crowned with due success. Cf. "Cleon," lines 186-7:

> "Imperfection means perfection hid,
> Reserved in part to grace the after time."

96. *The C Major of this life.* The musical terms in this passage are fully explained by Mrs. Turnbull and Miss Omerod in *Browning Society Papers.* Symbolically this line describes the musician as he comes back to everyday life, proud because of the vision that has been granted him, but with a consciousness that experiences so exalted are not for "human nature's daily food," and that their true function is to send one back to ordinary pains and pleasures with a new acquiescence.

(In *The Browning Society Papers* are Mrs. Turnbull's "Abt Vogler," and

three papers by Miss Helen Omerod: (1) "Abt Vogler the Man." (2) "Some Notes on Browning's Poems relating to Music." (3) "Andrea del Sarto and Abt Vogler.")

RABBI BEN EZRA

Ben Ezra was an eminent Jewish Rabbi of the Middle Ages. His *Commentaries* on the books of the Old Testament are of great value. Mr. A. J. Campbell, who has studied Browning's poem in connection with the writings of the real Rabbi Ben Ezra, thinks that the distinctive features of the Rabbi of the poem, and the philosophy ascribed to him, were drawn from the works of the historical Rabbi, the keynote of whose teaching was that the essential life of man is the life of the soul, and that age is more important than youth. (Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia.* Cf. also Berdoe, *Browning's Message to His Times,* pp. 157-172.)

1. *Grow old along with me.* Cf. *Saul,* lines 161-162. See Matthew Arnold's "'Tis time to grow old" for a beautiful statement of the pessimistic attitude toward old age.

7-15. It would be folly, says the Rabbi, to object to the unreasoning ambitions, the fluctuations of desire, the hopes and fears of youth. In fact (ll. 16-30), he counts these very aspirations toward the impossible, this very state of mental and spiritual unrest and doubt, a proof of the spark of divinity which separates men from beasts and allies them to God. It is a characteristic Browning doctrine that conflict, struggle, the pangs and throes of learning, are the stimuli through which character develops.

40-42. Cf. *Saul,* l. 295.

49-72. In lines 43-48 the Rabbi had urged the subservience of the body to the soul, but in these lines he shows that the life of the flesh is not to be underestimated, that ideal progress comes from a just alliance of the soul and the body. See Tennyson's "St. Simeon Stylites" for an account of the ascetic ideal in its lowest form.

81. *Adventure brave and new.* In "Prospice" death is reckoned an adversary to be courageously met and overcome. Here the Rabbi is represented as fearless and unperplexed as he contemplates the new life he will lead after death. In both poems we find unquestioning belief in an active and progressive and happy life after death.

85. *Youth ended, I shall try,* etc. Compare Tennyson's "By an Evolutionist."

87. *Leave the fire ashes.* In this figure the "fire" stands for the conflicts of life, the "gold" for whatever has proved of permanent worth, and the "ashes" for whatever has failed to stand the test of time and experience.

92. *A certain moment.* The moment between the fading of the sunset glory and the shutting down of evening darkness is here selected as the moment in which to appraise the work of the day. In the application of the simile to the life of man (lines 97-102) the "moment" apparently refers to old age when man has leisure and wisdom to appraise the Past.

102. *The Future.* The life of his "adventure brave and new" after death.

109-111. In "Old Pictures in Florence" Browning applies this idea to the deveolpment of art. As soon as men were content to repose in the perfection of Greek art (the thing "found made") stagnation ensued; the new life of art came when men strove for something new and original, even though their first attempts were crude ("acts uncouth").

120. *Nor let thee feel alone.* The solitude of age gives a chance for unhampered thought.

133-150. One of the things he has learned is that any judgment to be fair must take into account instincts, efforts, desires, as well as accomplishment.

151-186. This metaphor of the wheel is found in *Isaiah* lxiv, 8; *Jeremiah* xviii, 2-6; *Romans* ix, 21. Throughout this metaphor as Browning uses it, man seems to be "passive clay" in the hands of the potter, and under the power of the "machinery" the potter uses to give the soul its bent. The tone of the whole poem is, however, one of strenuous endeavor. Ardor, effort, progress, are the keynotes of life from youth to age. But life is finally counted a divine training for the service of God, and in this training the pious Rabbi sees joined the will of man and the care and guidance of God.

157. *All that is,* etc. Cf. "Abt Vogler," ll. 69-80.

CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS

The idea of this poem was evolved from Shakspere's Caliban, a strange, misshapen, fish-like being, one of the servants of Prospero in *The Tempest.* He was the son of a foul witch who had potent ministers and could control moon and tides, but could not undo her own hateful sorceries, and who worshiped a god called Setebos. Morally, Shakspere's Caliban was insensible to kindness, had bestial passions, was cowardly, vengeful, superstitious. He had keen animal instincts and knew the island well. He understood Prospero in some measure; learned to talk, to know the stars, to compose poetry, and took pleasure in music.

Thou thoughtest, etc. A quotation from *Psalms* l, 21. This sentence is the keynote of Caliban's theological speculations.

1. *Will.* For "he will" instead of "I will." Through most of the poem Caliban speaks of himself in the third person as a child does. But note lines 68-97, where Caliban rises to unusual mental heights under the stimulus of the gourd-fruit-mash and uses the first person. How is it in ll. 100-108, 135-136, 160?

1-23. This portion of Caliban's soliloquy and the portion in lines 284-295 give the setting for his speculations. The hot, still summer day creates a mood in which Caliban's ideas flow out easily into speech. The thunderstorm at the end abruptly calls him back from his speculations to his normal state of subservience and superstitious fear.

24. *Setebos.* The god of the Patagonians. When the natives were taken prisoners by Magellan, they "cryed upon their devil Setebos to help them." Eden, *History of Travaile.*

25. *He.* The pronoun of the third person when referring to Setebos is capitalized.

31. *It came of being ill at ease.* Each step in Caliban's reasoning proceeds from some personal experience or observation. In this case he reasons from the fish to Setebos. Caliban attributes to Setebos unlimited power to create and control in whatever is comparatively near at hand and changeable. But Caliban had been affected by the mystery of the starry heavens. The remoteness and fixedness of the stars had suggested a quiet, unalterable, passionless force beyond Setebos, who must, therefore, have limitations. He did not make the stars (l. 27), he cannot create a mate like himself (ll. 57-8), he cannot change his nature so as to be like the Quiet above him (ll. 144-5). Hence, like the fish, Setebos had a dissatisfied consciousness of a bliss he was not born for. Discontent with himself, spite, envy, restlessness, love of power as a means of distraction, are the motives that, according to Caliban's reasoning, actuated Setebos in his creation of the world.

45. *The fowls here, beast and creeping thing.* Browning's remarkably minute and accurate knowledge of small animals is well illustrated by this poem. For further illustration see *Saul,* the last soliloquy in *Pippa Passes,* and the lyric "Thus the Mayne glideth."

75. *Put case,* etc. In determining the natural attitude of Setebos toward his creations, the formula Caliban uses is, Caliban plus power equals Setebos. The illustration from the bird (ll. 75-97) shows cruelty, and unreasoning, capricious exercise of power. The caprice of Setebos is further emphasized in ll. 100-108.

117. *Hath cut a pipe.* In his attitude toward his creatures Setebos is envious of all human worth or happiness if it is for a moment unconscious of absolute dependence on him.

150. *Himself peeped late,* etc. As Caliban gets some poor solace out of imitating Prospero, so one reason for Setebos's creation of the world was a half-scornful attempt to delude himself into apparent content. His imitations, his "make believes," are the unwilling homage his weakness pays to the power of the Quiet.

170-184. The weaknesses of all living beings were special devices whereby Setebos could, through need and fear, torture and rule

185-199. Setebos worked also out of pure ennui. He liked the exercise of power, he liked to use his "wit," and he needed distraction.

200-210. Setebos hates and favors human beings without discoverable reason.

211-285. It is impossible to discover a way to please Setebos. His favor goes by caprice as does Caliban's with the daring squirrel and the terrified urchin, who please one day, and, doing the same things the next,

would bring down vengeance. The only philosophy at which Caliban can arrive is that it is best not to be too happy. Simulated misery is more likely to escape than any show of happiness.

MAY AND DEATH

In memory of Browning's cousin, James Silverthorne, the "Charles" of the poem. The "one plant" of the last two stanzas is supposed to be the *Spotted Persicaria,* "a common weed with purple stains upon its rather large leaves." According to popular tradition this plant grew beneath the Cross, and the stains were made by drops of blood from the Savior's wounds. (Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia,* page 268, quoting from Rev. H. Friend, *Flowers and Flower Lore.*)

PROSPICE

"Prospice" ("Look forward") was written in the autumn following Mrs. Browning's death. "It ends with the expression of his triumphant certainty of meeting her, and breaks forth at last into so great a cry of pure passion that ear and heart alike rejoice. Browning at his best, Browning in the central fire of his character, is in it." (Brooke, *The Poetry of Browning,* page 251.)

A FACE

"No poem in the volume of *Dramatis Personæ* is connected with pictorial art, unless it be the few lines entitled 'A Face,' lines of which Emily Patmore, the poet's wife, was the subject, and written, as Browning seldom wrote, for the mere record of beauty. That 'little head of hers' is transferred to Browning's panel in the manner of an early Tuscan piece of ideal loveliness." (Dowden, *Life of Browning.*)

14. *Correggio.* A famous Italian painter of the Lombard school. These lines well describe his style.

O LYRIC LOVE

These are the closing lines of the first book of *The Ring and the Book.* The passage is generally and probably rightly interpreted as an invocation to the spirit of his wife.

A WALL

This poem was written and printed as the Prologue to *Pacchiarotta and How he Worked in Distemper,* published in 1876. It was, however, given the title "A Wall" when published in 1880 in *Selections from Robert*

Browning's Poems, Second Series. The last two stanzas express one of the fundamental ideas of Browning's poetry. Under the figure of the wall with its pulsating robe of vines and the eagerness of the lover to penetrate to the life within the house, he sets forth his thought of the barrier between himself and a longed-for future life in heaven. The "forth to thee" is to be interpreted as referring to his wife.

HOUSE AND SHOP

Three of Browning's poems, "At the Mermaid," "House," and "Shop," refer with more or less explicitness to Shakspere. The last stanza in "House" contains a quotation from Wordsworth's "Scorn not the Sonnet" to the effect that in his sonnets Shakspere revealed the most intimate facts of his life. "At the Mermaid" and "House" both combat this idea. In "At the Mermaid" Browning in the person of Shakspere says:

"Which of you did I enable
Once to slip within my breast,
There to catalogue and label
What I like least, what love best,
Hope and fear, believe and doubt of,
Seek and shun, respect—deride?
Who has right to make a rout of
Rarities he found inside?"

As applied to Browning the poems represent the indignation with which he regarded such personal revelations, such utterance of sighs and groans, as characterized Byron (the "Last King" of "At the Mermaid"); but they overstate the impersonal nature of Browning's own work which is frequently a very direct statement of his own emotions and views, while even from his dramatic work it is not difficult to find his "hopes and fears, beliefs and doubts." In stanzas 10-12 of "At the Mermaid," for example, just after he has protested against "leaving bosom's gate ajar," he fully sets forth the joy, the optimism, of his own outlook on life. "Shop" is an indirect protest against the assumption that Shakspere wrote mainly for money, caring merely for the material success of his work. (See *Poet-Lore,* Vol. III, pp. 216-221, April, 1889, for Browning's tribute to Shakspere.) More directly the poem represents the starved life of the man whom "shop," the business necessary to earn a living, occupies "each day and all day long" with no spirit-life behind.

HERVÉ RIEL

This poem was written during Browning's second visit to Le Croisic in Brittany, in September, 1867. It was published in *The Cornhill Magazine,* March, 1871, the proceeds of one hundred guineas being sent by Browning

to the Paris Relief Fund, to provide food for the people after the siege of Paris. The story is historic. Mrs. Lemoyne, in 1884, read "Hervé Riel" to Browning and he then told her that it was his custom to learn all about the heroes and legends of any town that he stopped in and that he had thus, in going over the records of the town of St. Malo, come upon the story of Hervé Riel, which he narrated just as it happened in 1692, except that in reality the hero had a life holiday. "The facts of the story had been forgotten, and were denied at St. Malo; but the reports of the French Admiralty were looked up, and the facts established." (Dr. Furnivall quoted in Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia.*)

"GOOD TO FORGIVE"

This little poem was written and printed as the Prologue to *La Saisiaz* in 1878, but in the *Selections* it appeared as No. 3 of "Pisgah-Sights."

"SUCH A STARVED BANK OF MOSS"

Prefatory stanzas to *The Two Poets of Croisic.*

EPILOGUE TO THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC

This fate of the musician and the cricket has the same fundamental idea as the prefatory stanzas, the power of love to soften what is gruff and brighten what is somber in life.

64. *Music's son.* Goethe. The "Lotte" of the next line, the heroine of Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther,* was modeled in part on Charlotte Buff, with whom Goethe was at one time in love.

PHEIDIPPIDES

Χαίρετε, νικῶμεν. Rejoice we conquer!

2. *Dæmons.* In Greek mythology a superior order of beings between men and the gods.

4. *Her of the ægis and spear.* Athena, whose ægis was a scaly cloak or mantle bordered with serpents and bearing Medusa's head.

5. *Ye of the bow and the buskin.* Artemis or Diana, the huntress. Ancient statues represent her as wearing shoes laced to the ankle.

8. *Pan.* The god of nature, half goat and half man. To him was ascribed the power of causing sudden fright by his voice and appearance. He came suddenly into the midst of the Persians on the field of Marathon —so the legend runs—and threw them into such a "panic" that, for this reason, they lost the battle.

9. *Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix. Archon.* One of the nine rulers of Athens. *Tettix.* A grasshopper. "The Athenians sometimes wore golden grasshoppers in their hair as badges of honor, because these insects are supposed to spring from the ground, and thus they showed they were sprung from the original inhabitants of the country." Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia,* p. 336.)

12. *Reach Sparta for aid.* The distance between Athens and Sparta is about 135 miles.

18. *Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute, water and earth.* The Persians sent to those states which they wished to subject, messengers who were to ask earth and water as symbols of submission.

19. *Eretria.* An important city on the island of Eubœa.

20. *Hellas.* Greece.

38. *The moon, half-orbed.* Spartan troops finally came to Athens after the full moon.

47. *Filleted victim.* A victim whose head was decked with ribbons.

52. *Parnes.* Herodotus refers in this connection to the Parthenian mountain.

62. *Erebos.* Hades, the abode of shades or departed spirits.

83. *Fennel.* The Greek word Marathon means fennel.

89. *Miltiades.* One of the ten Athenian generals.

105. *Unforeseeing one.* The poet finishes the story, which he has hitherto allowed Pheidippides to tell for himself.

105. *Marathon day.* In the month of September, B. C. 490.

106. *Akropolis.* The stronghold of Athens.

MULÉYKEH

The love of the Arab for his horse is traditional. "The story is a common one and seems adapted from a Bedouin's anecdote told in Rollo Springfield's *The Horse and His Rider.*" (Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia,* p. 280.)

WANTING IS—WHAT?

This poem is in the nature of a prelude to the group of poems published under the title *Jocoseria,* 1883. Each poem in this volume shows the lack of some element that would have brought the human action or experience to perfection.

8. *Comer.* The invocation probably refers to the spirit of love with its inspiring, transforming power.

"NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE"

This poem was published in *Jocoseria* in 1883. It is doubtless to be grouped with the poems that refer directly to Mrs. Browning.

THE PATRIOT

Browning says that this poem has no direct historical reference. He calls it "An Old Story," because in all ages men have experienced this unjust reversal of public approval. The poem is merely an imaginative, dramatic representation of the fickleness of popular favor.

INSTANS TYRANNUS

The title of this poem means "Threatening Tyrant." It comes from Horace's "Ode on the Just Man," in *Odes,* III, 3, i. The just man is not frightened by the frown of the threatening tyrant—*non vultus instantis tyranni.* Archdeacon Farrar refers the incidents to persecution of the early Christians. The poem certainly deals with some period when the ruler of a great realm had unlimited power to follow out his most insignificant animosities, and when just men and just causes had no human recourse.

The general idea of the poem is clear and forcible, but there are many minor difficulties of interpretation.

6. *What was his force?* An ironic question. The man groveled because he was powerless to resist, and (line 10) because resistance might bring even worse punishment.

11. *Were the object,* etc. If the man could be made rich, if his life could be crowded with pleasures, if there could be found relatives or friends whom he loved, then there would be obvious ways of hurting him, he would stand forth in sufficient importance to make the swing of the tyrant's hand effective. But as it is, the man's poverty and friendlessness and meagerness of life render it difficult to find out vulnerable points of attack. He remains hidden (*perdue*) and, like the midge of the egg of an insect (*nit*), is safe through his very insignificance.

21. *spilth.* That which is poured out profusely. The *flagon* is a vessel with one handle and a long narrow neck or spout.

35. *Then a humor,* etc. The tyrant goes through various changes of mood in his attitude toward his enemy. In lines 35-43 he feels a moment of contemptuous compunction at the man's suffering, and recognizes the absurdity of a contest between a great king and a person as insignificant as a tricksy elf, a toad, or a rat. But in line 44 his mood turns. He perceives that the burden (*gravamen*) of the whole matter lies in the incredibly petty nature of this unconquerable, baffling opposition to his will. He sees how the situation would awaken the wonder of the great lords who abjectly obey his lightest word, but he concludes that, after all, the small becomes great if it vexes you.

53. *I soberly,* etc. Even the tyrant sees a kind of grotesque humor as he narrates first the elaborate plans to entrap and crush so seem-

ingly powerless a foe, and then the striking reversal of position when the man proves to have God on his side, and the tyrant becomes the one to cower in fear.

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND*

At the Congress of Vienna, in 1815, Lombardy and Venetia were assigned to Austria. Most of the inhabitants submitted to the foreign rule, but there were always small bands of patriots who stirred up revolutions against Austria. The chief revolution was that led by Mazzini in 1848, and when he was in exile he read this poem with much appreciation. In *Pippa Passes* (1840), in the story of Luigi and the Austrian police, Browning had already given a picture based on Italy's struggle for freedom. In 1844 he visited Italy and then wrote "The Italian in England," which appeared in 1845. This poem does not represent a definite historic incident, but such a one as might have occurred in the life of some Italian patriot. For a similar feeling towards Italian independence see Mrs. Browning's *Casa Guidi Windows* (written 1848-1851). For earlier poems see Byron's "Ode" beginning "O Venice, Venice, when thy marble walls," Shelley's "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills," and the following sonnet by Wordsworth:

> "Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee;
> And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
> Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
> Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
> She was a maiden City, bright and free;
> No guile seduced, no force could violate;
> And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
> She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
> And what if she had seen those glories fade,
> Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
> Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
> When her long life hath reached its final day:
> Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
> Of that which once was great, is passed away."

8. *Charles.* Carlo Alberto, King of Sardinia. He had used severe measures against "Young Italy," the party founded by Mazzini.

19. *Metternich.* A noted Austrian diplomat and one of the most powerful enemies of Italian freedom.

75. *Duomo.* The most famous church in Padua.

76. *Tenebræ. Darkness.* A religious service commemorative of the crucifixion. Fifteen lighted candles are put out one at a time, symbolizing the growing darkness of the world up to the time of the crucifixion.

"ROUND US THE WILD CREATURES"

The first interlude in *Ferishtah's Fancies*. These interludes are love lyrics which follow the separate Fables and Fancies of the Persian Dervish Ferishtah, and state in terms of the affections the truth embodied in didactic or philosophical fashion in the fables. In the first fable, "The Eagle," the Dervish observes an eagle feeding some deserted ravens. His first inference is that men will be cared for as the ravens, without effort of their own; later he sees that men should be as eagles and provide for the weak. The Dervish at once seeks the largest sphere of human usefulness with the words

> "And since men congregate
> In towns, not woods—to Ispahan forthwith!"

The lyric protests against the temptation to self-centered seclusion on the part of those who are entirely satisfied in each other's love.

PROLOGUE TO ASOLANDO

The volume of poems entitled *Asolando* was, by a strange chance, published on the day of Browning's death. Most of these poems were written in 1888-1889. The book was dedicated to Mrs. Arthur Bronson. The "Prologue" should be compared with Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality."

13. *Chrysopras*. The ruby and the emerald of this passage stand for rich red and green. The chrysopras is also green (an apple green variety of Chalcedony), but the first part of the word is from the Greek χρυσος, "gold," and that may be the color intended here.

SUMMUM BONUM

The title means, The Chief Good. The poem came out in *Asolando* in 1889.

EPILOGUE TO ASOLANDO

In the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Feb. 1, 1890, the following incident is given concerning the third stanza of this poem:

"One evening just before his death illness, the poet was reading this from a proof to his daughter-in-law and sister. He said: 'It almost looks like bragging to say this, and as if I ought to cancel it; but it's the simple truth; and as it's true, it shall stand.'"

Compare this poem and Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar."

PIPPA PASSES

Mrs. Sutherland Orr writes that while Browning was one day strolling through Dulwich Wood "the image flashed upon him of someone walking . . . alone through life; one apparently too obscure to leave a trace

of his or her passage, yet exercising a lasting though unconscious influence at every step of it; and the image shaped itself into the little silk-winder of Asolo, Felippa, or Pippa."

Introduction

Asolo in the Trevisan. Asolo, a fortified medieval town at the foot of a hill surmounted by the ruins of a castle, and situated in the center of the silk-growing and silk-spinning industries, is in the province of Treviso about thirty-three miles northwest of Venice.

62. *Monsignor.* A title conferred upon prelates in the Roman Catholic church. This Monsignor is the chief personage in Part III, or *Night.*

88. *Martagon.* A kind of lily with light purplish flowers. The common name is Turk's Cap. Perhaps that suggested to Browning his comparison to the round bunch of flesh on the head of a Turk bird, or turkey.

131. *Possagno church.* Designed by Canova, who was born at Possagno, an obscure village near Asolo.

181. *The Dome.* The Duomo, or Cathedral, in the center of the town. The palace of the Bishop's brother is close by.

Morning

28. *St. Mark's.* There is an extensive view from Asolo. Venice, with its cupolas and steeples, is seen to the east. Ottima detects the belfry of the Church of St. Mark. The towns of Vicenza and Padua are also discernible.

59. *The Capuchin.* A branch of the Franciscan order of monks. Their habit is brown.

170. *Campanula chalice.* The flower of any one of a large genus of flowers with bell-shaped corollas.

Interlude I

27. *Et canibus nostris.* Virgil, *Eclogues* iii, 67. *"Notior ut jam sit canibus non Delia nostris"*—"So that now not Delia's self is more familiar to our dogs." The boy Giovacchino of whose poetry they are making fun evidently had ideals not in harmony with the ways of these Venetian art students. These "dissolute, brutalized, heartless bunglers," as Jules calls them, attack with quick, clever, merciless tongues whatever savors of idealism, aspiration, purity. Their revenge for the scornful superiority manifested towards them by Jules is to secure, by a well-managed trick, a marriage between him and a paid model.

86. *Canova's gallery.* Possagno was the birthplace of the sculptor Canova, and the circular church there was designed by him. In the gallery at Possagno is his Psyche (*Psiche-fanciulla,* or Psyche the young girl); his Pietà (the mother with the dead Christ in her arms) is in the church.

111. *Malamocco.* A little town on an island near Venice.

111. *Alciphron.* A Greek writer (about 200 A. D.) of fictitious letters famous for the purity of their style and for the knowledge they give of Greek social customs.

115. *Lire.* Plural of lira, an Italian coin equal to 18.6 cents in our money.

117. *A scented letter.* Forged letters have represented this fourteen year old, ignorant model as delicate, shy, reserved, intellectually alert, with lofty poetic and artistic ideals.

117. *Tydeus.* One of the Seven Allies in the enterprise against Thebes. Jules is supposed to have modeled a statue of him for the Venetian Academy of Fine Arts. From Scene II, 14, we see that it is still in clay.

120. *Paolina.* Some actress at the Phenix, the leading theater of Venice.

140. *Hannibal Scratchy.* In jest they burlesque the name of Annibale Caracci, a famous Italian artist, and apply it to one of their number.

Noon

39. *This minion.* This favorite. Bessarion (1395-1472), a learned Greek cardinal, discovered a poem, "The Rape of Helen," written by a Greek epic poet, Coluthus, in the sixth century, and Bessarion's scribe copied it out on parchment with blue, red, and dark-brown lettering.

43. *Odyssey.* Homer's account of the adventures of Ulysses. The quoted passage is in the *Odyssey,* Bk. XXII, 10. When Ulysses reached home he wreaked vengeance on the suitors of his wife. Antinous was the first to fall. The story of the "bitter shaft" blotted out by a flower is symbolic of the story of the hatred of Lutwyche, which was robbed of its bitterness by Phene's love.

50. *Almaign Kaiser.* The German Emperor. *Swart-green* is really "black-green"; here it means the "dark-green" of bronze. The Emperor's truncheon is a short staff, the emblem of his office.

54. *Hippolyta.* The Queen of the Amazons on a fine horse from Numidia.

59. *Bay-filleted.* The bay or laurel with which victors were crowned was supposed to be an antidote against thunder because it was the tree of Apollo. Pliny says that Tiberius and some other Roman emperors wore a wreath of bay leaves as an amulet, especially in thunder-storms. (See Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable;* also Byron, *Childe Harold,* IV, 41.)

61. *Hipparchus.* In B. C. 514 Harmodius and Aristogeiton conspired against the tyrants Hippias and Hipparchus, and carrying swords hid in myrtle, they slew Hipparchus. Cf. Byron, *Childe Harold,* III, 20.

> "All that most endears
> Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a sword
> Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant lord."

75. *Parsley.* An aromatic herb used in ancient time in crowns worn at feasts.

86. *Archetype.* The original pattern or model. Beautiful colors and shapes in flowers, in flames, trees, and fruit suggested to the poet the beauty of perfect human forms. The rosy bloom of the peach bending close over the bough and nestled among the leaves is sufficient to suggest rosy limbs, and from that suggestion comes the whole imaginative picture of the dryad, the nymph of the woods.

95. *Facile chalk.* Jules exults in the facility with which the artist, in any realm of art, manipulates his implements and his materials. His especial enthusiasm is for marble, which he has come to regard as an original, primitive substance, containing in itself all other substances. It may be made to seem as light and clear as air, as brilliant as diamonds. Sometimes as his chisel strikes, it seems to be metal. Again it seems to be actual flesh and blood. At moments when the sculptor works with swift intensity it seems to flush and glow like flame.

181. *I am a painter,* etc. The poem by Lutwyche is professedly "slow, involved, and mystical." But Jules gradually perceives the purport of the words. Lutwyche's hate is to have its most hideous possible aspect because it is to appear suddenly through Love's rose-braided mask.

272. *The Cornaro.* Catharine Cornaro was the wife of James, King of Cyprus. After his death she was induced to abdicate in favor of the Republic of Venice, which took possession of Cyprus in 1487. She was assigned a palace and court at Asolo. She was generous, kind, just, and deeply beloved. Her life seemed to hold all possible external conditions of happiness. The song is further explained in lines 275-279.

306. *Ancona.* A lovely city in eastern Italy.

Interlude II

1. *Bluphocks.* Browning's note on this character reads, "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (*Matthew* v, 45.)

2. *Your Bishop's Intendant.* The Bishop's Superintendent (whose real name is Maffeo) has charge of the estate the Bishop has just inherited from his brother. The money Bluphocks has is the bribe given him by Maffeo to destroy Pippa, who is really the heir to the estate. Maffeo expects the Bishop to reward him well for this service.

11. *Prussia Improper.* "The arm of land bounded on the north by the Baltic and on the south by Poland was long called 'Prussia Proper' to distinguish it from the other provinces of the kingdom. Königsberg is just over the boundary of Brandenberg." (Rolfe, *Select Poems of Browning.*)

14. *Chaldee.* A semitic dialect.

21. *Celarent, Darii, Ferio.* Coined words used in logic to designate certain valid forms of syllogism.

24. *Posy.* A brief inscription or motto originally in verse, and suitable for a ring or some trinket.

25. *How Moses,* etc. For the story of Moses and the plagues of Egypt see *Exodus* viii and x. For the story of Jonah (who was commanded, however, not to go to Tarshish) see *Jonah* i. For Balaam and his ass see *Numbers* xxii, 22.

33. *Bishop Beveridge.* There was a Bishop of that name, but of course Bluphocks is making a pun.

35. *Charon's wherry.* Charon was a god of hell. It was his business to carry the dead across the river Styx. People thus carried over the Stygian ferry paid Charon by a small coin put between their lips.

36. *Lupine-seed.* "In plant-lore 'lupine' means wolfish, and is suggestive of the Evil One." (Berdoe, *Browning Cyclopædia.*)

36. *Hecate's supper.* Hecate was a goddess of hell to whom offerings of food were made. An *obolus* is a silver coin worth about fifteen cents.

39. *Zwanziger.* A twenty-kreuzer piece of money.

47. *Prince Metternich.* A celebrated Austrian statesman. (1773-1859.)

54. *Panurge.* A prominent character in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* by Rabelais. Hertrippa is a magician who gives Panurge advice on the subject of marriage. Bluphocks is simply racking his brain for words to rhyme with "Pippa," so that he may write doggerel poetry to or about her. For "King Agrippa" see *Acts* xxvi, 27.

77. *Carbonari.* All persons leaving a city had to have a passport officially signed giving the destination and the date of departure. Luigi had obtained such a passport for Vienna for that night. It was, however, suspected that this was a mere trick to give a wrong notion of his whereabouts. If the passport should prove to be a pretense, other suspicions against Luigi would be confirmed; it would be taken for granted that he belonged to the Carbonari, a secret society of Italian patriots; he would be arrested and sent to the prison at Spielberg. But if he should go to Vienna he is to be let alone. The officers are, of course, on the wrong track. If Luigi goes to Vienna it is to carry out his purpose of killing the tyrant. If he stays in Asolo it means that he has abandoned that purpose.

Evening

6. *Lucius Junius.* This name comes easily to Luigi's lips because Lucius Junius Brutus inspired the Romans against Tarquin.

14. *Old Franz.* The Austrian Emperor, Francis I. Luigi's fancy is caught by the echoes and the flowers, but they play into his dominant idea of the freedom of Italy.

19. *Pellicos.* Silvio Pellico was an Italian patriot who had suffered long imprisonment in Spielberg Castle.

122. *Andrea,* etc. Three former Italian patriots who had conspired against Austria.

135-143. Note in these lines how little Luigi really understands of the point at issue. His emotional temperament has been stirred to the point of desperate action, but the "ground for killing the King" he hardly knows.

152. *Jupiter.* The largest of the planets. When a planet rises after midnight it becomes a morning star.

163. *Titian at Treviso.* Treviso is seventeen miles from Venice. Its cathedral contains a fine Annunciation by Titian which Luigi and his betrothed Chiari had planned to see together.

164. *A king lived long ago.* This song was published in 1835 and later adapted for this poem. The song has a great effect on Luigi because beside his mental picture of the hated Austrian ruler he now places his old folk-king who judged his people wisely, whose dignity and grace awed even a python, and whom the gods loved. The possibility of having good kings stirs his waning determination to rid the earth of evil ones.

Interlude III

6. *The same treat.* The feast of the girl is made up of fig-peckers (birds that feed on figs), lampreys (eel-like fish esteemed a delicacy), and red wine from Breganza, a town noted for its wines.

17. *Spring's come,* etc. These girls are well differentiated. The "first girl" is set apart from the others by her superior refinement, by her longing for her country home, and by her unhappiness with Cecco. The "third girl" seems to be the leader in the plan against Pippa.

22. *Deuzans,* etc. Varieties of apples.

64. *Ortolans.* Birds about the size of larks, and an expensive delicacy.

66. *Polenta.* A coarse corn-meal pudding.

89. *Great rich handsome Englishman.* Bluphocks, who has been hired by the Intendant to lure Pippa into evil courses.

Night

1. *Monsignor.* The Bishop has come from Messina in Sicily to take possession of his dead brother's estate. The "Ugo" to whom he speaks is the Intendant mentioned at the beginning of *Interlude II.*

4. *Benedicto benedicatur.* A form of blessing for the repast. "Let it be consecrated with a good saying."

9. *Assumption Day.* The festival of the Assumption of the Virgin into Heaven comes August 25.

36. *Jules.* This is the Jules of *Noon.* His history is thus carried on beyond the point where we left him at the close of his interview with Phene.

51. *Correggio.* An Italian artist (1494-1534).

72. *Podere.* (Plural, *poderi.*) A small farm or manor.

83. *Cesena.* An Episcopal city about twelve miles from Forli.

108. *Millet-cake.* A cake made of an Italian grain and eaten only by the poorest classes.

135. *Letter No. 3.* The information from Rome is based on a wrong assumption. The elder brother had an infant heir whom the second brother endeavored to put out of the way in order that he might himself inherit the estate. He hired Maffeo to destroy the child, and, according to the information from Rome, Maffeo did so. On this assumption Maffeo is to be arrested and the money and land given him by the second brother to keep the deed a secret are now to revert to the church.

154. *So old a story.* In reality Maffeo has been more astute than they thought. He did not kill the child but kept it ready to produce as the heir to the estates if the second brother at any time proved delinquent in the required payments.

174. *Let us understand one another.* He believes that when the Bishop sees himself about to lose the estate, he too will show himself ready for a bargain. The Bishop is simply to keep still and Maffeo will see that the heir—who is Pippa—shall be finally brought to shame and death. The Bishop is to have the estates, and Maffeo is to keep his ill-gotten gains and be given a chance to escape. The Bishop is apparently listening to the tempter when he hears Pippa's song. Its fresh lilting sweetness, and especially, perhaps, the wording of the last line, touch his heart and his conscience, and he suddenly orders Maffeo's arrest, at the same time uttering the prayer, "Have mercy upon me, O God."

Epilogue

7. *My Zanze.* Zanze was evidently the "third girl" who took Pippa in charge at the end of *Interlude III.*

30. *Monsignor's people.* Zanze was apparently talking to Pippa under the Monsignor's window. Pippa broke off the unwelcome talk by her song, and Zanze had hardly time to begin again when there came the noise of the arrest of Maffeo.